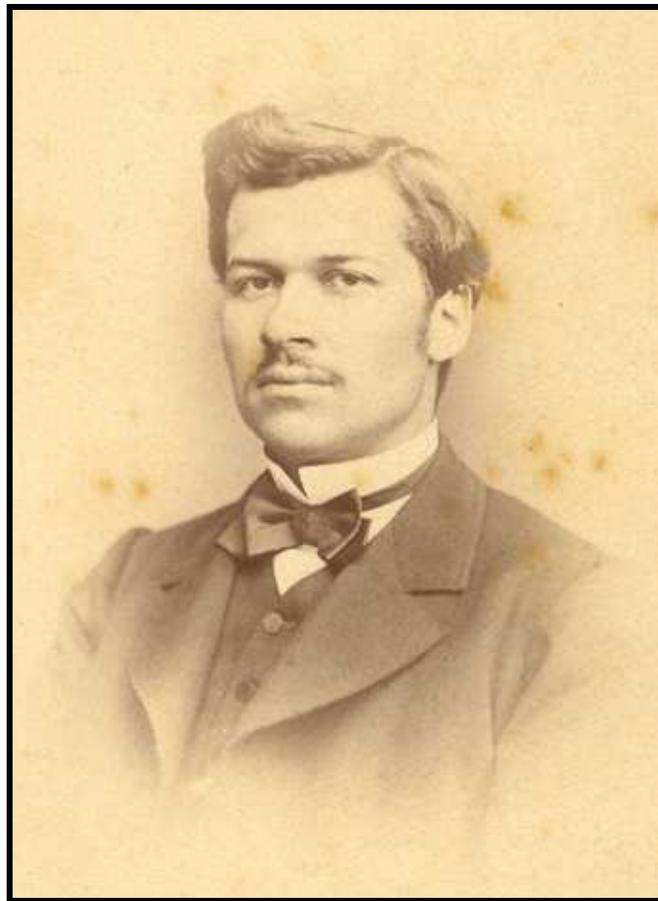


‘Evangelical Convictions’

**The Life and Thought of
the Reverend Josias Jessé Roy
(1849-1931)**



J. J. Roy at Montauban, c. 1872

Patrick Carter

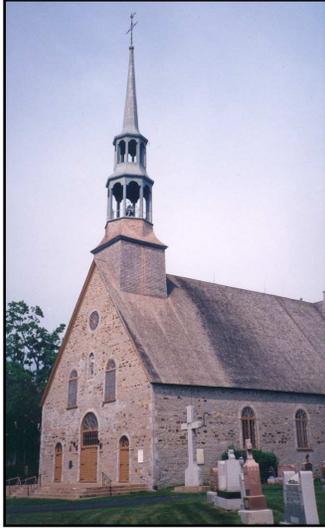
Hamilton, Ontario, 2005



On 7 June 1880 the Roy family of Sabrevois, a small farming community in the Richelieu valley south of St-Jean, assembled for a formal photograph. The occasion is unknown, but it may have been intended to mark the seventieth birthday of the family patriarch Charles Roy one week earlier. The photograph shows Charles and his wife Felicité proudly surrounded by their twelve adult children (seven sons and five daughters). Three sons are dressed as Protestant clergy. This was notable, for although raised as Roman Catholics Charles and Felicité had been received into the Church of England four decades earlier. Following their conversion (one of the first by a large French-Canadian family) the Roys had been closely involved for decades in efforts to evangelize among the French Catholic population of Quebec, supporting schools, churches and missions at Sabrevois and Montreal. Sons and grandsons served as Protestant clergy, while daughters married into clerical ranks. So great was this contribution that (before his death in 1887) Charles would boast that on any Sunday morning a member of his family was preaching in a Church of England pulpit in every province of Canada. While this may have been an exaggeration, there could be no doubt of the family's impact upon the growth of the church in Canada. And few individuals made a more substantial contribution to this influence than Charles's seventh son, Josias Jessé, who would serve the church in Quebec and Manitoba for over half a century.

The Roy family were *pur laine*, tracing their ancestry back to the earliest French colonists in Quebec. Both Charles and his wife Felicité were descended from daughters of Abraham Martin, a royal pilot who served Champlain and was one of the first farmers at Quebec, on lands later known as the Plains of Abraham. The first Roy in Quebec was Pierre Roy (1638-1721), a native of St Michel-le-Clou in Poitou (France), who had arrived in Montreal around 1665 as an *engagé* (indentured servant) of the prominent fur merchant Jacques Leber. He married a *fille de Roi* Catherine Ducharme in 1672 and eventually became a prosperous farmer at La Prairie. His descendants for several generations farmed on lands south of the St Lawrence, finally settling around 1776 at L'Acadie in the Richelieu valley. It was here that Charles Roy was born on 30 May 1810, the eldest son of Charles Roy (1784-1860) and Marie Louise Cartier (1790-1874). Through his mother, Charles Roy was a cousin of the lawyer and Father of Confederation Sir George-Etienne Cartier (1814-1873).

For almost two centuries the Richelieu valley had served as a natural trade and invasion route from the English colonies to the south, and as a result it was actively defended. In addition to the fortress at Chambly, the British (and the French before them) stationed regiments in the valley. Military officers passed regularly along the Richelieu and through L'Acadie. On one occasion



(likely at the end of the War of 1812 or shortly after) two officers rested at the home of Charles and Marie Louise Roy. As a token of thanks for this hospitality they presented a French New Testament to the eldest son, the young Charles. It has been suggested that this event probably took place in 1816, when a Swiss mercenary regiment was stationed in the upper Richelieu valley (which would explain why the officers were carrying a French-language New Testament). Their gift to the young boy would have momentous consequences. Charles's mother Marie Louise took the book and showed it to the parish priest at L'Acadie, who advised that she hide it away and not allow her children to read it. It is likely, however, that her husband did read it from time to time (he apparently particularly enjoyed the book of Proverbs). Years passed, until their eldest son Charles married Felicite Simard (daughter of a local Acadian family) on 12 February 1833. Before leaving home to set up his own farm, Charles asked for (and was given) the New Testament which his mother had hidden away.

The 1820s and 1830s were difficult times for farmers in Lower Canada, as declining crop yields, a growing population, and increasing competition from American farmers in the major West Indies grain market created an agricultural and demographic crisis. Improvements such as the opening of the Chambly canal and the completion of the Champlain and St Lawrence Railway (from La Prairie to St Jean) did little to ameliorate the situation. Young Charles Roy was typical of many young men who were forced to look elsewhere in the Richelieu valley for land. Settling in the same village as his parents was not a realistic option. Instead, upon their marriage in 1833 Charles and Felicite moved to Sabrevois on the east bank of the Richelieu River. Many of their neighbours in L'Acadie did likewise. This migration was encouraged by the seigneur of Sabrevois Gabriel Christie (a British officer), who even maintained a land agent at L'Acadie. Between 1825 and 1831 Sabrevois doubled in population, to more than 1100 persons, and 28% of the new settlers between 1815 and 1835 came from the parish of L'Acadie – including Charles Roy and his bride, who soon set to work clearing the bush on their new farm along the Richelieu.



By 1840 the industrious Charles had built a successful farm, employing over a dozen workmen and proving a valued *consitaire*, who regularly supplied stone to the seignury agent McGinnis. At the same time Charles assiduously read the New Testament brought from L'Acadie, and over time 'he became persuaded that what it contained was not what he had been taught and that several of the doctrines which he had learned were not in accordance with the teachings of the Bible'. He was also negatively affected by the retreats organized by Bishop Bourget during 1841 which aimed to revive lay Catholicism in Quebec, which the sober Charles Roy evidently found insincere. Seeking guidance in his faith journey, Charles first traveled to Montreal to meet a Swiss Protestant minister to discuss his concerns. He then was introduced by the seignury agent

McGinnis to a native of Jersey in the Channel Islands (home of his future daughter-in-law), who gave him a French copy of the Book of Common Prayer. Reading this independently (with particular attention to that statement of Anglican orthodoxy – the Thirty-Nine Articles), Charles determined in 1845 that he would seek admission to the Church of England – a momentous decision. On 26 July 1846 Charles made a public profession of his faith before Bishop Mountain at Christieville and was received into the Church of England. Generally somewhat suspicious of



such conversions, Bishop Mountain was impressed with Charles Roy's apparent sincerity. His was no emotional decision, but instead seemed based upon careful thought and reflection. With the support of the Christies (the seigneurial family) Charles now pushed for a parish to be established in Sabrevois, so that his growing family would not need to travel the miles north to Christieville. The Sabrevois Mission (including the Church of the Messiah, and a school) which was established in response to this need, was described by the historian R.M. Black as 'evangelical in origin and support, [yet] in tone balanced, discreet, and quiet'. In this it reflected the character of its chief

adherent, Charles Roy. While Bishop Mountain had praised Roy, some scorned his conversion. Abbé Larocque of St-Jean-sur-Richelieu denounced Charles Roy in an 1852 book as among 'certains idiots canadiens qui n'ont assurément point d'autre mérite que celui de s'être déclarés Protestants'. Such hostility in part grew from a conviction that, to depart from the Roman Catholic faith was to abandon the French-Canadian identity in the nineteenth century. Charles Roy and his family (in the eyes of some) had turned their backs upon their heritage – a history which had stretched back to the earliest days of the permanent French presence in North America. It is worth noting that only one of Charles's daughters married a French-Canadian.

It was into this new evangelical environment that Josias Jessé was born at Sabrevois on 11 May, 1849, the eighth child of Charles Roy and Felicité Simard (and the first to be baptized at the church in Sabrevois). As a child Josias lived on the farm, and probably traveled regularly to L'Acadie to visit his grandparents and other Roy and Simard relations. He likely spent considerable time with his elder brother Jean (b.1843) and his younger brother Samuel (b 1851), to whom he remained close throughout his life. Despite their religious differences with their neighbours (which could lead to taunting of the Roy children by their fellows – Josias's brother Jean described one incident when he defended himself ably with a broom!), his parents evidently enjoyed friendly relations with some Sabrevois farmers, who even came to the house to discuss and debate religion with the Charles Roy. Perhaps these neighbours included Jean-Baptiste Mercier, whose son Honoré (later a nationalist premier of Quebec) was eight years older than Josias.



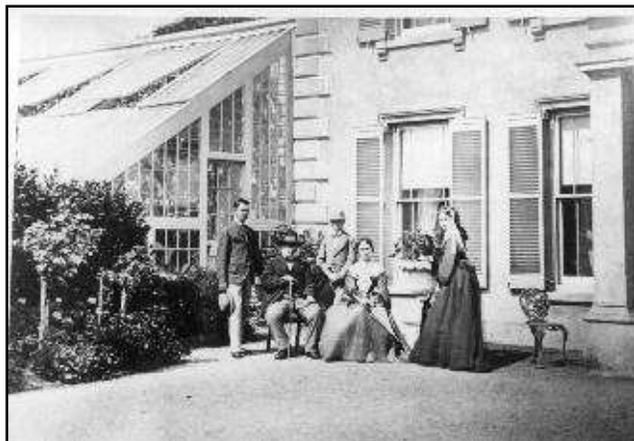
Josias's early schooling was at the Mission's primary school established at Sabrevois (across from the Church), where his teachers likely included the Swiss minister Daniel Gavin (d. 1855), a founder of the Sabrevois Mission. Gavin was succeeded as teacher by others who included Josias's own brother Edouard (twelve years his senior), and by Revd Benjamin Papineau Lewis, rector of Sabrevois, who became the young boy's brother-in-law in the summer of 1862, when he married his elder sister Joséphine.

The adolescent Josias must have shown considerable academic aptitude, for in 1867 he was selected to attend McGill College in Montreal. In early 1869, with the encouragement of the Sabrevois Mission (recognizing the need for future leaders to expand the work), Josias was sent to Paris to continue his studies, in preparation for entering the ministry. The costs of his studies were paid by his father, as well as several Mission patrons. While at Paris he was supervised by an English chaplain, Revd Edward Forbes, whom he assisted as a lay reader. His studies were disrupted, however, by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war (1870-71); the brutal siege of Paris prevented his return to the city, forcing him look elsewhere (and to request additional funds from his Canadian supporters, to cover emergency expenses). Paris and its environs were dangerous in 1871. Josias wrote home that, as a foreigner, he feared being suspected as a spy.



Seeking an opportunity to further his training, Josias elected to travel to Montauban (located in the Garonne north of Toulouse, in south-west France), to study at the Faculté de Montauban. The Faculté was a prominent college for training Protestant clergy whose origins dated to the late sixteenth century, and had been re-established by Napoleon in 1808-10. There was already a connection to Quebec, for Montauban had been approached in the 1830s by Mission societies interested in obtaining francophone clergy for the evangelism effort among the French-Canadians, but to no effect. The preliminary programme at the Faculté (two years) consisted of language studies (Hebrew, Greek and Latin, as well as German), courses in biblical archaeology and church history. Josias certainly completed this, and began the theological training (three years), which included study of the scriptures and theology, as well as practical training as a preacher. Josias obtained a degree at Montauban (equivalent to a B.D.). In an effort to improve the academic caliber of its graduates, from 1860 onwards the authorities at Montauban had sent their best students to study in Germany. It is likely this practice which led Josias to spend some time studying at the University of Bonn, where he developed his facility in German.

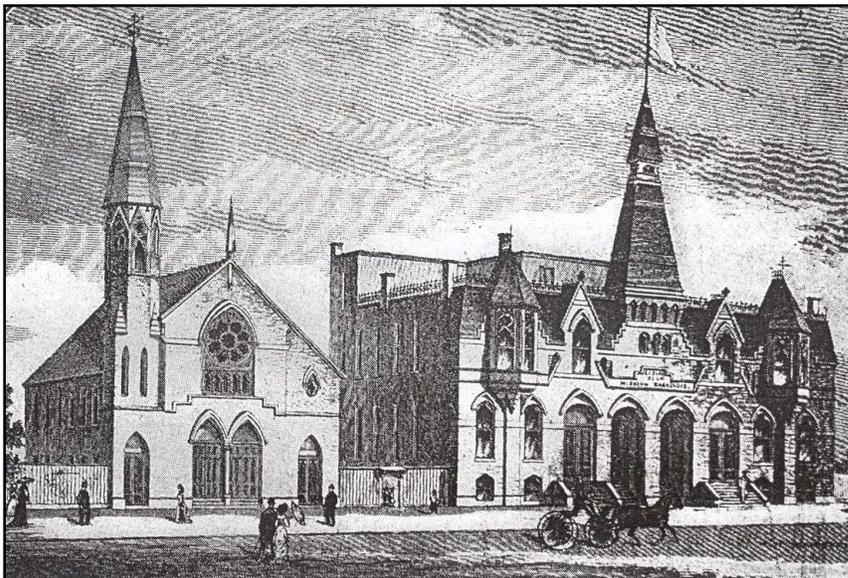
While in Paris Josias had met a young law student, Theodore LeGallais (b. 1853), a native of Jersey (Channel Islands). The two young men became friends, and Theodore invited Josias to spend the holidays at his home. Theodore's father, Jean LeGallais, had been a jeweler and silversmith in St Helier, the capital of Jersey, and had acquired an estate in the parish of St Saviour known as La Ferrière, where he lived in retirement with his two unmarried daughters, Noemi and Rebecca, his son Theodore, and his orphaned nephew Henri LeBailly (another son, DeGruchy, had died several years earlier). The family had close ties to prominent Huguenot (Protestant) families in France. Josias evidently relished his visits to Jersey and found life at La Ferrière especially attractive, for on 11 April 1874 he married Theodore's younger sister Rebecca at the parish church of St Saviour. As a wedding gift, Josias presented his beloved Rebecca with a leather-bound French edition of the Book of Common Prayer – a book which more than any other had shaped his family's story. Josias was almost 25 years old, his bride was aged 31.



Following their wedding, Josias and Rebecca sailed to Quebec in 1874, and he was promptly ordained deacon at the Church of the Messiah in Sabrevois, the church in which he had been baptized. Josias now immersed himself in the work of the Sabrevois Mission (operated by the Colonial Church and School Society - CCSS), at an annual salary of \$325. After a brief time at Sabrevois (where Rebecca served as matron of the Boy's School), he was assigned the task of forming a francophone parish in Montreal. His elder brother Rev. Jean Roy had already been working as an itinerant missionary in Pointe St- Charles and Saint-Henri (Montreal); his evident success encouraged the Sabrevois Mission to envision a more permanent presence in the city. Josias was expected to divide his time between the Mission and active proselytizing among the French-Canadian population of Montreal. Accordingly in February 1876 he established a mission chapel, in a converted shop at 687 rue St-Joseph (now Notre-Dame). In addition to his pastoral duties, Josias continued actively raising funds for the Mission: traveling to Ontario in 1878 and also to the Maritimes. His efforts earned him the gratitude of the CCSS committee, which passed a motion in January 1879 congratulating him 'for his successful efforts in having recently obtained such large amounts on behalf of the Sabrevois Mission'. He also secured the title of 'Traveling Agent' for the Sabrevois Mission. In order to assist in fulfilling the ambition of building a proper church, Josias was also dispatched to England to raise £2000. Within three years the mission had moved to a church built on rue Chatham at a cost of \$6000, consecrated as l'Eglise du Rédempteur. Reflecting the limited lasting success of conversion, the first congregation was largely composed of francophone Protestant immigrants from Alsace and the Channel Islands, with relatively few local converts from Catholicism. In preparation for this parish work, Josias was ordained a priest by the Bishop of Montreal on 5 May 1878.



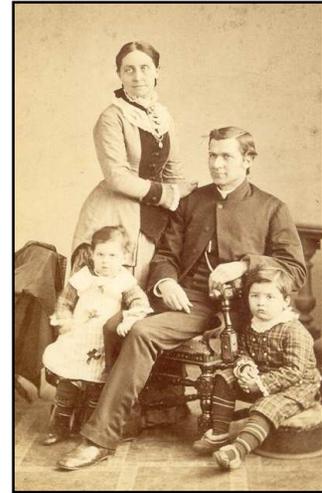
With the support of Bishop Bond of Montreal it was decided to relocate the school and college from Sabrevois to Montreal, on a site adjacent to the new church. Having already amply demonstrated his skill in fundraising and organization, Josias was made responsible for planning the new school. Constructed at a cost of \$15698, Josias extolled the new school as 'an institution of which no churchman will need to be ashamed'. The church now served as chapel for the school, whose students soon numbered 150.



Given his energetic support of the Mission for almost a decade, the reasons for his sudden resignation in 1883 remain unclear. In view of his later outspoken support for active evangelism and efforts to convert Roman Catholics and criticism of the lack of support shown by some in Montreal, the growing focus of the

Mission upon education and increasing reluctance to proselytize may have encouraged him to look elsewhere. Or perhaps he felt overlooked for the post of principal of the new school on rue Chatham, which had gone to a colleague in November 1882. Regardless of the reasons for severing his connection, it is clear that many in the Mission felt betrayed by his departure, described by one colleague as ‘an irreparable loss’. Leaving Montreal, Josias now took charge of parishes at Rawdon and St-Hyacinthe.

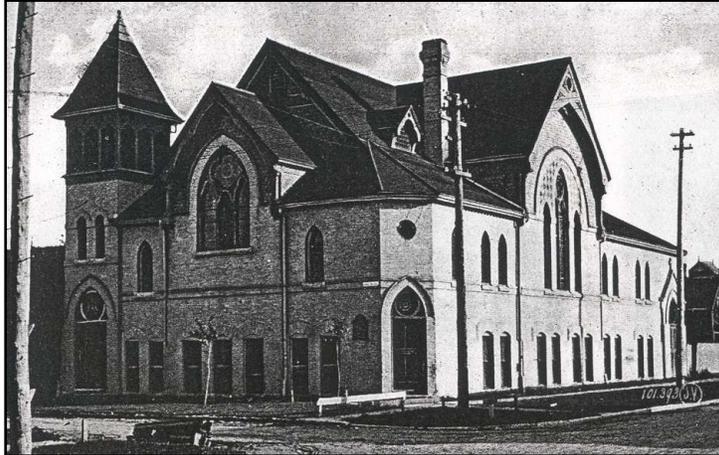
In the years following his return from Europe, Josias had a growing family to consider. Scarcely a year after their marriage, Rebecca gave birth to their first son, Henri LeGallais, at Sabrevois on 7 May 1875. Another son, Theodore Josias, soon followed, and then a daughter Jessie Rebecca, born in Montreal on 11 October 1880. Two more sons joined the growing Roy family: Horace Gavin in March 1882 and Oswald Caleb in May 1883. In March 1886, however, tragedy struck at St-Hyacinthe. In the middle of the night Rebecca (expecting her sixth child) awoke and went to the kitchen for a drink of water. A trap-door to the cellar had been left open by Josias to help heat the house. In the darkness Rebecca fell down the stairs into the cellar. She was seriously injured, suffered a miscarriage, and died on 27 March 1886. Alone with five young children, Josias was devastated – his grief intensified by guilt, as he blamed himself in part for the accident.



It is clear that the tragedy at St-Hyacinthe (coupled with dissatisfaction with the course of the Sabrevois Mission) left Josias anxious to seek a change of surroundings. An opportunity soon presented itself. In mid-August 1886 he accepted an invitation to become rector of the recently established St George’s Church in Winnipeg (at a salary of \$1000). The incumbent of St George’s, Canon O’Meara, had recently returned from a tour of eastern Canada, during which he had met a number of clergy and discussed with them the possibility of relocating to Winnipeg. The family arrived in Manitoba at the end of September, traveling much of the way on the newly completed CPR (the first transcontinental service had reached Winnipeg on 1 July). The political convulsions following the North-West rebellion a year earlier (and the execution of Louis Riel in November 1885) had barely subsided. The gateway to the prairies, with the completion of the transcontinental railroad that year Winnipeg was beginning to grow rapidly. It was an era of speculation and economic boom. The city boasted a population approaching 30,000, with five Church of England parishes when the Roys arrived. On Sunday 3 October 1886 Josias was inducted as rector of St George’s by the Dean of Rupert’s Land, and the *Free Press* reported that his initial sermon made ‘a very favorable impression’. On Josias’s first Sunday morning at St George’s, however, the population of Winnipeg was preoccupied with reports of a rail disaster east of Rat Portage (Kenora), when the westbound express had derailed in muskeg, causing numerous injuries and damage.

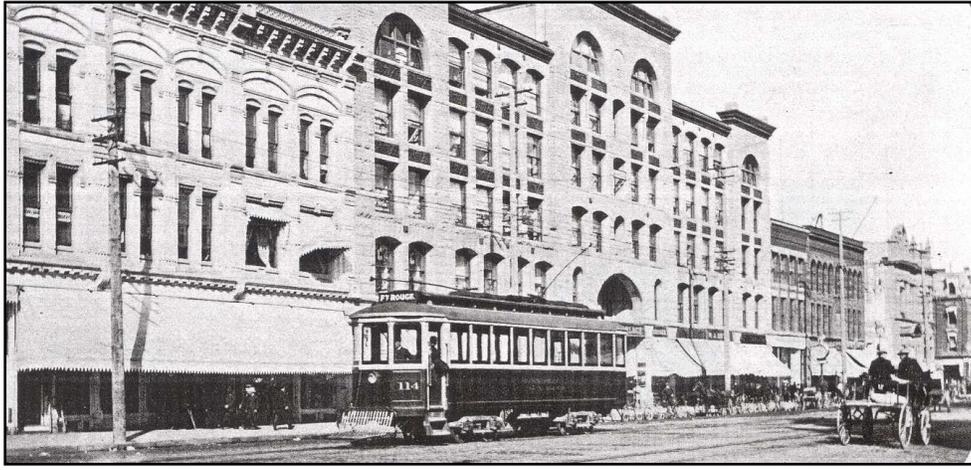
Settling into life at 163 Jemima Street, near St George’s, Josias now faced the challenges of raising a young family alone, so he turned to Rebecca’s elder sister Noëmi (b.1840) for support and companionship. At the age of 47 she left Jersey for Canada, to care for her niece and nephews. Before heading to the west she first visited the family home at Sabrevois, where she was welcomed by the extended Roy family. Josias met Noëmi in Port Arthur, Ontario, where they were married on 28 April 1887, and then returned to Winnipeg.

As rector of St George's from 1886, Josias was a vigorous pastor, working to build up his congregation. St George's had an active Sunday School, young peoples' organizations, and even operated a small-scale savings bank for parishioners, to encourage thrift. Among the other virtues encouraged was abstinence: Josias was a supporter of the Church of England Temperance Society (whose youth members at St George's included his future son-in-law Ernest Leslie Carter). He also regularly spoke at meetings of the Blue-Ribbon Society (on topics like 'Temperance Developments in Quebec'), and developed a reputation for 'promoting temperance with an intemperate zeal'. By the early 1890s the congregation of St George's had outgrown its original home at Lydia Avenue and William Street, requiring a new church, constructed in 1894 at the corner of Isabel Street and Bannantyne Avenue.



In addition to his work building the parish of St George's and addressing local audiences, Josias regularly produced evangelical polemics. A stream of letters to the *Free Press* and church publications flowed from his pen, as well as tracts on a variety of controversial topics. In 1889 he addressed the topical issue of emerging Anglo-Catholicism in an article in the parish newsletter (later published as a tract entitled *Ritualism*), responding to reports of a 'Mass' recently celebrated at All Saints church in Winnipeg in support of Bishop Edward King of Lincoln (England), who was being prosecuted for ritualism (charges included the use of lighted candles on the communion table, and the singing of the *Agnus Dei* before communion). Denouncing this 'Mass' at All Saints, Josias warned of 'a rising tide of Ritualism, which is threatening to flood Rupert's Land'. Such hyperbole earned him a sharp rebuke from one opponent, who chastised the rector of St George's: 'It is just the spirit which you have shewn in this matter that has done so much latterly to reduce Evangelicalism from its former respectable position as a school of thought to the level of a mere contentious faction, and troubler of the Church.' The subtle introduction of Catholicism in the Canadian church remained a regular theme for Roy. The appearance in 1908 of a hymnal for the Canadian church which included some traditional Catholic eucharistic and Marian hymns elicited a vigorous response from the rector of St George's – a memorial submitted to General Synod demonstrating in meticulous detail how far the doctrines expressed in certain hymn texts deviated from the tenets of Protestantism and from that traditional statement of Anglican orthodoxy (which had meant so much to his father Charles): the Thirty-Nine Articles.

Josias was a fearless controversialist, prepared to tackle any issue which threatened to undermine spiritual life in Winnipeg. In 1902 he addressed the issue of proposed Sunday street car traffic, which would be a violation of the 4th Commandment. It would undermine Sabbath observance, he argued: 'Everyone knows and feels in his own heart that the natural and irresistible result of this Sunday traffic must be to withdraw all who take part in it from the care of their own souls, to divert them from the cultivation of those interests which are spiritual and eternal. It certainly seriously endangers the souls of the Sabbath working street car servants and Sabbath pleasure seekers.' Religious, moral, economic and social arguments are marshaled to counter the threat to the Sabbath. Far from allowing workers increased leisure, many will soon find that they too are required to work on Sundays. This struggle against Sunday street cars was the struggle for



workers' rights, in Roy's view: 'Our street car servants, motormen, conductors etc now stand in the sacred Thermopylae of the freedom of all workingmen in the city to rest on the Sabbath Day'. To lend weight to his arguments, the rector of St George's also solicited letters of support from his evangelical colleagues in Toronto, London (Ontario), Montreal, and Vancouver (where his friend L. Norman Tucker – previously of the Sabrevois Mission in Montreal – described Sunday street cars as 'one of the most secularizing influences in the whole community'). W.H. Wade, rector of the Church of the Ascension (Church of England) in Hamilton, wrote ironically to Roy of 'benefits' which followed the introduction of street car service on the Lord's Day, allowing the population 'to spend their Sundays at our delightful resorts on the lake and making it very pleasant for the Sunday yachtsmen and Sunday golfers'! Despite Josias's literary and rhetorical efforts, however, this was a battle which would ultimately be lost.

Given his own training and his experience with the Sabrevois Mission, Josias was also keenly interested in education. He taught French and German at St John's College in Winnipeg (in part to supplement his salary at St George's), and also served occasionally as a university examiner. His arrival in Manitoba in 1886 had coincided with the beginning of a major dispute on the future of education in the province: the Manitoba Schools Question. Originally the province had two separate school systems – Protestant and Roman Catholic. The increasing numbers of English Protestant settlers in the province created tensions in this arrangement, which were further inflamed in 1889 by the arrival of D'Alton McCarthy – the notorious anti-Catholic, anti-French firebrand who vehemently denounced French-language and Catholic education. For his part, the evangelical rector of St George's used a Sunday evening sermon in March 1889 to denounce the powerful influence of the Jesuits upon education in Manitoba and elsewhere. In this attack (later published as *The Jesuit Order, or An Infallible Pope, who "being dead, speaketh" about the Jesuits*), Josias used a novel approach: building his case against the Jesuit order and their malevolent influence by employing the arguments advanced by an 'infallible' Pope Clement XIV, who in 1773 had suppressed the Jesuits. In response to the controversy stirred up by McCarthy and others, the government of Manitoba decided to end denominational schools. This attack upon French Catholic rights drew the ire of nationalists in Quebec (including Josias's old Sabrevois neighbour, the Quebec Premier Honoré Mercier) and led to a crisis for the Conservative government of Sir John A. Macdonald and his successors. For Josias, the solution to the question was clear: in order to limit the control of the Roman Catholic Church over education (particularly in French), it was better to replace all denominational schools with a single, public system, leaving religious education to the church and family sphere. His was one of the first voices calling for such a solution. The end result, however, of this policy was the elimination of French education in the province (by 1916). Again, Josias confronted the central dilemma of his family's history, which had already undermined the Sabrevois Mission: it was difficult to successfully defend a French identity which was not Catholic. For McCarthy and his supporters, anti-Catholic and anti-French bigotry were two sides of the same coin. In this world-view, French-Canadian Protestants were largely irrelevant.

In his general political views, Josias seems to have gravitated towards the Conservatives, particularly in later years. He certainly became a critic of the Liberal leader, Wilfrid Laurier during the First World War (likely as a result of the former Prime Minister's opposition to conscription). In common with other Canadians, Josias's own family experience may have played a part in shaping his support for Sir Robert Borden and the Union Government, for his second son Theodore was fighting overseas. On one occasion Noëmi met and was greeted by Laurier – an encounter which drew a frosty reaction from Josias when he learned of it. Roy had good relations with John W. Dafoe (1866-1944), the editor of the *Free Press* from 1901. Dafoe had arrived in Winnipeg in the same year as Roy (1886), and had also spent some years in Montreal. In addition to this common background, the two men shared a forthright style as well as a deep suspicion of the power of the Roman Catholic church in education and a firm conviction of the need for a single, public school system. While Dafoe had long supported the Liberals, during the Great War he switched his support to the Union government led by Robert Borden. When Josias took his young grandson Ernest to meet Dafoe at his office in the Free Press Building, the boy noted one other similarity between the two men: each sported an impressive white beard!

Family life in Winnipeg over the years brought a mixture of sorrow and satisfaction. In mid December 1886, barely four months after arriving in the West, diphtheria struck the Roy household. Three children fell ill with this potentially deadly infection; while two recovered,



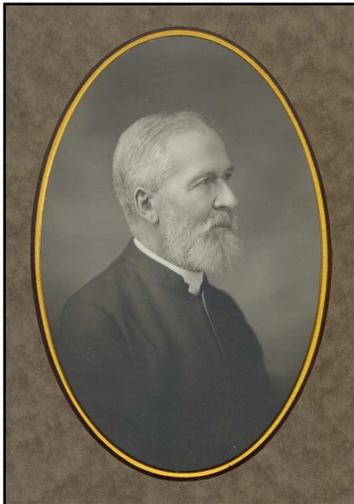
Oswald (the youngest) succumbed on 17 December, aged three years and six months. The following October word reached Winnipeg of the death of Charles Roy in Sabrevois, aged 77. In the autumn of 1900 Josias's youngest surviving son, 18-year-old Horace, who worked at a store in Winnipeg, fell ill one evening with a fever. Despite treatment his condition rapidly worsened, and two days later on 20 October 1900, Horace died. The Roy family and the church community of St George's (where the young man was actively involved) were devastated.

Given their father's considerable education, it was natural that the Roy children pursued further studies. Henri was sent to study at Wycliffe College in Toronto, in preparation for the ministry. He was ordained on Trinity Sunday, 1900 and left for Vancouver, where he would serve three years as curate. Jessie attended the Manitoba Normal School and Manitoba College in Winnipeg, graduating in 1903 with a B.A. degree (one of a handful of women to do so). She then began teaching in rural schools outside of Winnipeg.

Within a few years the Roy family began to grow. After several years in Vancouver, Henri returned to Manitoba where he became rector of Emerson. In June 1906 Josias officiated at his son's wedding to Violet Allen of Emerson, and in July 1908 the wedding of his daughter Jessie took place at St George's to a young man of the parish, Ernest Leslie Carter. Soon grandchildren arrived: the first was Ernest LeGallais Carter, born in Winnipeg in June 1909. Two daughters followed for Jessie and Ernest Carter: Muriel Joy (December 1911) and Noëmi Mary Priscilla (February 1914). Henri and Violet had two daughters: Norah (February 1913) and Dorothy Marguerite (June 1916), having earlier lost an infant son Eustace Gordon in January 1911. In 1912 Jessie and Ernest escaped from the stresses of city life and moved with their young family to Kenora to farm on land owned by the Roys. Their departure was balanced, however, when in the following year Henri and his family relocated from Boisevain to Winnipeg, where he began work in the synod office of the Diocese of Rupert's Land. The children and grandchildren were regular visitors to the house on Isabel Street.

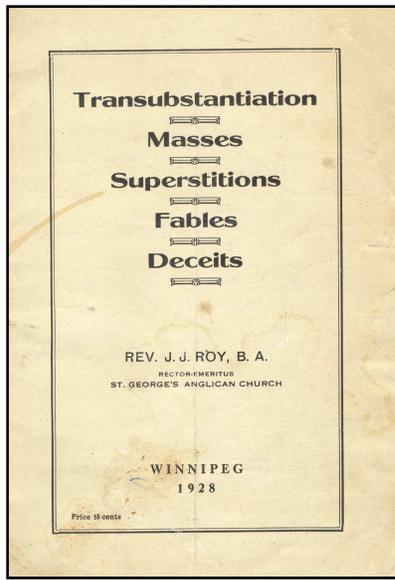


As Winnipeg continued to grow rapidly through the first decades of the twentieth century, it became evident that the church on the corner of Isabel and Bannantyne was poorly situated to serve the growing population of western Winnipeg. As a result it was decided to open a mission church at Grosvenor and Wilton. Soon after this 'new' St George's opened, Josias decided that it was time to retire. In September 1918 his successor arrived, and (after 32 years) Josias retired from active ministry at the age of 69 (although he remained as rector emeritus of St George's). Yet even in retirement Josias remained an active figure in Winnipeg church circles. He continued to assist at St George's and in other parishes. For example, in November 1923 Josias read a lesson at the opening of the (new) St Thomas's church in Winnipeg (he had helped establish the first many years before).



As well as the grandchildren's visits, there were other entertainments at 68 Isabel Street. At Christmas 1924 Noëmi and Josias received a crystal radio set. As there was only a single headpiece, listening to broadcasts of church services from St Matthew's Winnipeg required a compromise to share the receiver: Noëmi listened to the prayers and hymns, while Josias (naturally) followed every word of the sermon! They also spent time visiting the farm at Norman, Ontario, where Jessie and family had settled. Josias also kept in contact with his brother Samuel at Sabrevois. The Roys had inherited longevity from their parents (Charles had died in 1887 aged 77, and Felicité passed away in 1903 at the age of 90). As late as November 1927 all but two of their siblings were still living: Josephiné (aged 87) was in good health ('elle est encore bien vigoureuse'), while Salomé (aged 86) was unfortunately bed-ridden. For his part Samuel (aged 76) was well, apart from a touch of rheumatism. He was still farming, and offered to send Josias butter and honey if he wished!





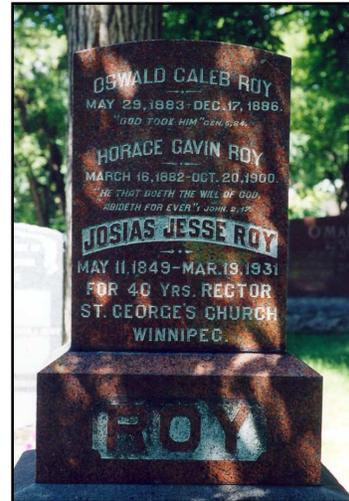
In his retirement Josias remained a vigorous polemicist, ever vigilant to defend the Church of England in Canada from encroaching Catholicism. In December 1927 he wrote a series of letters to the *Free Press* concerning eucharistic doctrine, and in particular the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. The occasion of this correspondence was the failed attempt in the British Parliament to revise the Book of Common Prayer. Echoing the 'Mass' controversy of 1889 and his earlier attacks upon the 1908 hymnal, Josias scented danger in this revised liturgy, which 'inculcates, not perhaps directly and explicitly, but implicitly and emphatically, the Roman Catholic sacramental principle, and the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation'. As evidence for his warning he cited the words of the Anglo-Catholic peer Lord Halifax, that 'the Lord's Supper is neither more nor less than the mass in England'.

Despite decades living in Winnipeg, Josias naturally retained a keen interest in the fate of the Sabrevois Mission and the Eglise du Rédempteur which he had established in Montreal decades earlier. The Mission had declined in numbers, the school had been closed, and the diocesan leadership no longer gave it the support which it had previously enjoyed. His concern at the withering of his early work prompted Josias in June 1930 to write an article for *L'Aurore*, a newsletter of French Protestants in Quebec, in which he condemned the lack of evangelical zeal shown by Anglicans in Montreal in the strongest terms. The occasion was the repeal of a diocesan canon (by-law) which had mandated a yearly collection for the work of the French-Canadian mission (including l'Eglise du Rédempteur). Yet much work remained to be done among those who had left the Roman Catholic church, providing education for their children and pastoral care for their families. Josias vigorously rebuked those who opposed proselytism, accusing them of lacking 'courage and heroism'. By contrast, Roman Catholics were eager to promote their faith, with considerable results. He closed his article with a passionate warning: 'Proselytism! Rome is not ashamed of it – neither of the word nor of the thing! Rome glories in it, of which many a so-called Protestant is afraid and rejects it with contempt. This position is unworthy of their fathers who have sealed their convictions with their blood so as to remain in the good tradition. Let us cease to pay ourselves with mere words, and say clearly and without subterfuge that he who refuses to propagate his faith is on the fair road to lose it'. In his reply to this stinging broadside, the Bishop of Montreal calmly declared that 'it would be a very great pity to circulate the extract from L'Aurore [in the diocese] because it is so full of inaccuracies'. Rejecting Josias's charges, he defended the Church's efforts among French-Canadians without the need for 'aggressive proselytizing means'. This exchange between Isabel Street (Winnipeg) and Bishopscourt (Montreal) was followed by a surprising offer from Josias to return to Montreal (at the age of 79) to provide pastoral care (without stipend) for l'Eglise du Rédempteur, whose rector Revd Henri Benoit was dying. Thanking Josias for his thoughtfulness, the Bishop politely declined.

Not content with this rebuff, in January 1931 Josias returned to the fate of French-Canadian Protestantism, drafting a memorandum for the Bishop of Montreal calling for the revitalization of the Sabrevois Mission, which he proposed should be renamed 'The French Missionary Society of the Dominion Anglican Church (F.M.S.D.A.C.)', reflecting the wider scope of the work. Across Canada the Society would support missionaries in districts with large Roman Catholic

populations, assist in parishes, promote public lectures on ‘the great subjects of the Romish controversies’ (a subject dear to Roy’s heart), and hold ‘indoor and open-air evangelistic meetings’. The Society would also arrange for distribution of bibles and scripture texts (as practiced by the Mission in earlier days). Funds previously donated for this work had been diverted to other causes – a practice which Josias denounced in the strongest terms. Josias stressed above all the importance of having mission work and preaching *in French*, carried out by Francophone clergy. In his view, too great a reliance upon English clergy had doomed earlier efforts, in part by reinforcing the identification of Protestantism with English domination (and thus Roman Catholicism with French-Canadian identity and nationalism). His experience in Manitoba had strengthened this lesson. In making this point, Josias was tacitly acknowledging that (for most French Canadians) embracing the Protestant creed most often meant abandoning their language and culture. The hope of Charles Roy and his sons (including Josias) that the Sabrevois Mission’s work would prevent this had not been realized.

While his mind remained vigorous and his pen poised to promote the cause of French-Canadian Protestantism, Josias now laboured alone. Noëmi had died at 68 Isabel Street on 8 April 1929 aged 89, after a brief illness. Her funeral procession, which traveled through the city from St George’s north to St John’s cemetery, was a considerable affair, attracting the attention of many Winnipeg residents – including Gladys Tomkins, a twenty-five year old secretary who would later meet and marry Josias and Noëmi’s grandson Ernest. Following his wife’s death, Josias continued to live in the house on Isabel Street, surrounded by his books and with a study lined with manuscript sermons and other papers – the remnants of a half-century of controversial writing and preaching. For a time his grandson Ernest, now working in Winnipeg, came to stay with him. Josias Jessé Roy died suddenly at home on Thursday 19 March 1931, in his 82nd year. Two days later his funeral was held at St George’s, after which he was buried in St John’s cemetery overlooking the Red River, next to Noëmi and his sons Horace and Oswald.



In its obituary, the *Manitoba Free Press* characterized J.J. Roy as ‘a man of high scholastic attainments and strong evangelical convictions, [who] made a deep impression upon Winnipeg’.

Come and hear the wonderful romance of a French Bible, a personal experience by the Rev. J. J. Roy, B.D., at the annual meeting of the Canadian Bible Society in the Bible House, Jan. 12th, at 8 p.m.

The son of a remarkable Quebec farmer, Josias had studied in universities in France and Germany, before embarking upon a career as pastor, teacher, administrator and controversialist – first in his native province and then, for over four decades, in Manitoba. In an age when impassioned religious polemic was commonplace, J.J. Roy was a tireless defender of his evangelical convictions, despite frequent criticism from opponents. When invited to address meetings, the rector of St George’s occasionally recounted his own family history: the soldiers’ gift of a New Testament, his father’s conversion, the development of the Sabrevois Mission, and all that had followed. It was this heritage which, more than anything, had helped to shape Josias’s career and convictions: deep distrust of Catholicism, and a dedication to the cause of French Protestantism rooted in the Church of England. Personal faith and family pride were closely entwined – for this ‘wonderful romance’ was equally ‘personal experience’.

Illustrations:

- Cover - J.J. Roy at Montauban (France), c.1872 [photo: Achille Bouis, Montauban]
Pg 1 – The Roy family, 7 June 1880 (Josias seated at left) [photo: source unknown]
Pg 2 – Parish Church of L’Acadie, 1999 [photo: PRNC]
Pg 2 – Charles Roy, date unknown [photo: source unknown]
Pg 3 – Church of the Messiah (Anglican) at Sabrevois, 1999 [photo: PRNC]
Pg 3 – Roy family home, Sabrevois, watercolour painted by Noëmi LeGallais, 1886
Pg 4 – Faculté building at Montauban (France) [photo: internet]
Pg 4 – LeGallais family at LaFerrière (St Saviour, Jersey), c. 1870 (John LeGallais seated with hat/cane, Rebecca LeGallais standing at right) [photo: source unknown]
Pg 5 – J.J. Roy at St Helier (Jersey), c. 1874 [photo: Apslett and Green, St Helier]
Pg 5 – L’Eglise du Rédempteur and Sabrevois College, rue Chatham, Montreal, c.1880
Pg 6 – Roy family (Josias, Rebecca, Henri and Theodore) at Montreal, c. 1878 [photo: I.G.Parks, Montreal]
Pg 7 – St George’s Anglican Church, Isabel and Bannantyne, c. 1894 [photo: source unknown]
Pg 8 – Main Street North, Winnipeg, 1903 [photo: *Manitoba Free Press*]
Pg 9 – Bannantyne Ave, at Isabel St, Winnipeg, 1903 [photo: *Manitoba Free Press*]
Pg 10 – Noëmi Roy with grandchildren, c. 1920 [photo: source unknown]
Pg 10 – J.J. Roy, c. 1918, Winnipeg [photo: Richardson, Winnipeg]
Pg 10 – Noëmi Roy, c. 1918, Winnipeg [photo: Richardson, Winnipeg]
Pg 11 – Tract by J.J. Roy, *Transubstantiation, Masses, Superstitions, Fables, Deceits* (Winnipeg, 1928).
Pg 12 – Grave of J.J. Roy, St John’s Cemetery, Winnipeg, 2001 [photo: PRNC]
Pg 12 – Leaflet advertising address by J.J. Roy in Winnipeg, no date.

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