

# *The Remarkable Rev. Thaddeus Osgood:*

## *A Study in the Evangelical Spirit in the Canadas\**

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### I

The revival of religious feeling in North America in the early nineteenth century threw up many men whose lives were devoted to communicating the message of their extraordinary spiritual experience. One such man was the Rev. Thaddeus Osgood. From the first time he set foot in the Canadas, in 1807, until his death some forty years later, he worked tirelessly among the inhabitants of rural frontier and urban slum for the edification of mankind and the greater glory of God. In both provinces his name was associated with the development of day and Sunday schools, the education of the Indians, the temperance movement and sabbatarianism, the organization of Sunday school unions and tract societies, and the attack on urban poverty and vice; and he enjoyed the support of many respectable and influential colonists in this work. Moreover, he was able to raise large sums of money abroad for his enterprises in the colonies, and in the early years of evangelicalism he was in touch with some of its foremost spokesmen. Yet he remains an obscure figure in Canadian social history. Though he is often mentioned in passing by historians of education or religion, no systematic examination of his career exists nor has he ever been placed fully in the context of his times.<sup>1</sup> The little attention he does receive leaves the distinct impression that he was merely a crank.

For several reasons such neglect is understandable. The materials for a biography are widely scattered in a variety of public and private records relating to Upper and Lower Canada and in English sources. Much of the evidence has to be used with caution since it was generated by Osgood himself. As Osgood had no permanent denominational ties there is no institutional continuity to his story and hence the threads of his life are not

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Osgood is mentioned briefly in Judith FINGARD, "'Grapes in the Wilderness': The Bible Society in British North America in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Histoire sociale — Social History*, V (April, 1972): 5-31, and "'English Humanitarianism and the Colonial Mind: Walter Bromley in Nova Scotia, 1813-25,'" *Canadian Historical Review*, LIV (June 1973): 123-51; J. Donald WILSON, "'No Blanket to be Worn in School': The Education of Indians in Early Nineteenth-Century Ontario", *Histoire sociale — Social History*, VII (Nov. 1974): 293-305. A letter by Osgood is quoted in Michael S. Cross, ed., *The Workingman in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 193. G.W. Spragge considers Osgood's work in the context of a particular educational movement, "'Monitorial Schools in the Canadas, 1810-1845'" (unpublished D. Paed. thesis, University of Toronto, 1935).

easily picked up. Moreover, for all his efforts he left few lasting monuments. The charitable schemes he organized bore little fruit. His work among the unfortunates of society passed into oblivion with them, while his plans, often eccentric, remained only grandiose dreams.

On the other hand, his story is not without importance, for Osgood was acting within an evangelical movement that helped shape the colonial world. For reasons of faith, and following the example of other evangelicals, he sought to remove the evils he saw in his society. To do so he seized upon a number of philanthropic schemes aimed at improving the lot of those who lacked skills and self-sufficiency in the new world. Throughout the Canadas, the people to whom he took his ideas were willing to accept the principle of social action, for such schemes reflected their own developing social conscience. Newspaper editors gave him space, clergymen allowed him to use their churches, steamboat captains gave him free passages, and the laity gave their shillings. Moreover, in this work Osgood anticipated many of the same conclusions that his fellow colonists would draw about the means of remedying their society's deficiencies. Thus his activities tended to mirror the slow transformation of Canadian society from its unorganized and often, for the poor, brutalized social condition to the much more highly organized, institutionalized and humanitarian world of mid-century. Even his failures help to illuminate the means by which that transformation took place.

## II

We know little of Osgood's childhood except that he was born in 1775 into a Massachusetts family who stressed "religion, honest industry, with temperance and economy,"<sup>2</sup> principles that Osgood would follow all his life. By his twenties, having served an apprenticeship as a tanner, he was running his own business. Two events, however, changed his course. First, either because of a serious illness that he later ascribed to the unhealthy atmosphere of the tannery, or because of the shock he sustained by the death of his fiancée on the eve of their marriage,<sup>3</sup> he gave up his work. Of more importance, he found a vocation. In one of the evangelical revivals sweeping the northeastern states at the turn of the century, Osgood experienced a profound religious conversion that fired him with the desire to "devote the remainder of his life to the service of his Redeemer."<sup>4</sup> To prepare himself he enrolled at Dartmouth College and eventually, in the manner of the times, embarked on his studies for the ministry under the guidance of various Congregational ministers. With their aid he developed a simple, evangelical creed that would sustain him the rest of his life.

<sup>2</sup> Public Archives of Canada [P.A.C.], RG5, C1, Vol. 112, No. 6173, Osgood to Governor-General, 28 July 1843. Biographical details are given here and in the *Montreal Register*, 6 Nov. 1845; Thaddeus OSGOOD, *The Canadian Visitor* (London: 1829).

<sup>3</sup> *Canadian Independent*, XIII (Jan. 1867): 283.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

During his ministerial training he studied under the Rev. J. Lathrop, one of the moving spirits in the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and Others in North America;<sup>5</sup> and after his ordination in 1808,<sup>6</sup> Osgood was sent under the auspices of the Society as a missionary to the western frontier. For reasons which are not clear, his mission field became the Canadas — the newly settled and isolated communities of Upper Canada and the Eastern Townships, where Osgood found what he described as “a great want of Christian instruction.”<sup>7</sup> Over the next forty years he would tour other frontier areas of North America,<sup>8</sup> but Upper and Lower Canada would remain the focal point of his activities and aspirations.

Though he went as a Congregationalist, his institutional ties to that sect soon became tenuous. In the Canadas he did not join or found a church but rather took the whole population for his congregation. This unusual position stemmed directly from one peculiarity of his faith, an article of belief which he held with a special tenacity: “After comparing the different systems of Christian belief, I was convinced, that the plain truths of the Bible, as believed and taught by all good men, are what should be preached and practised rather than the curious speculations which have divided the church of Christ.”<sup>9</sup> Osgood’s indifference to the dogmatic niceties that separated Christians would mark him off from most fellow clergymen and would profoundly influence the shape of his life’s work.

The daily pattern of that work was already well-established by the spring of 1809, when Osgood announced his arrival in York to “the Friends of Morality” and his intentions of travelling through the Canadas, preaching, visiting schools and families for devotions, attempting to convert the heathen and succour the faithful.<sup>10</sup> Osgood’s most pressing duty throughout a long and active life was to preach the word of God, and like other contemporary missionaries he spent an enormous amount of time and energy in meeting the spiritual needs of scattered communities. His self-imposed circuits were large and demanded prodigious efforts. On a typical month’s trip in the depths of winter he logged “834 miles, visited fifteen schools, and preached fourteen times.”<sup>11</sup> His pace hardly slackened as he grew older; at the age of seventy-six he travelled from Montreal to Georgia during

<sup>5</sup> Not the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. See Robert F. BERKHOFER, *Salvation and the Savage* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), especially pp. 3, 152-3.

<sup>6</sup> *Damnable Heresies Defined and Described in a Sermon preached at North Wilbraham, June 15, 1808*; At the Ordination of the Rev. Thaddeus Osgood, to the Office and Work of an Evangelist, by J. Lathrop, D.D.... 1811.

<sup>7</sup> *Montreal Register*, 6 Nov. 1845.

<sup>8</sup> Many of these trips were for the purpose of collecting money and books for his Canadian endeavours, as well as preaching. See for example, London Missionary Society Archives, Box 1, Folder 8, Jacket C, Osgood to Rev. Tracey, 14 March 1816; P.A.C., RG4, Al, Vol. S-405, pp. 10-11, Osgood to Buller, 16 Aug. 1838; *Montreal Witness*, 16 Nov. 1846, 15 Nov. 1847.

<sup>9</sup> P.A.C., RG5, Cl, Vol. 112, No. 6173, Osgood to Governor-General, 28 July 1843.

<sup>10</sup> *York Gazette*, 9 Mar. 1809.

<sup>11</sup> OSGOOD, *The Canadian Visitor*, pp. 67-72.

the winter and to Wisconsin in the summer, preaching at many of the towns and settlements along the way.<sup>12</sup>

To accomplish the vast spiritual awakening which Osgood desired, these gruelling efforts were not enough. He became convinced that faith must be augmented by "means" — that all-encompassing term for good works in the name of religion. "The Bible tells us," he insisted, "that God intends to convert the world by the use of means. Infant schools, Sunday schools, Education, Tract and Bible Societies must be established ... and seminaries are wanting to train up teachers and prepare good soldiers for this spiritual warfare."<sup>13</sup> Osgood took his models both from Britain and the United States, where in the same militant spirit, benevolent individuals sustained by the power of evangelical fervour were using the most remarkable variety of "means" to attack social injustice and moral degradation. In England, Robert Rakes introduced Sunday schools in the 1780s as an antidote to youthful vice; within a few years, the great missionary societies began their work, Bible and Tract Societies were formed, and the Clapham Sect carried the new enthusiasm into the secular world. In the United States the revitalized churches formed their own mission and tract societies. The reforming power of Christian action was a dominant theme of the age.

In his search for good works it was the most natural thing for Osgood to seize first on the tract movement. Not only did he believe inspirational literature to be a means of "influencing the ignorant and reforming the vicious,"<sup>14</sup> but he had ample opportunity to leave tracts and sermons in dozens of remote hamlets. Moreover, he could distribute large quantities of such literature at little cost to himself. Established bodies like the London Missionary Society and the Religious Tract Society provided him with a good deal of free material, and he financed the printing of his own inspirational compositions with money obtained through a constant barrage of appeals to benevolent colonists.<sup>15</sup>

Only the literate could find salvation through the reading of tracts, however, and since Osgood encountered much illiteracy in the back townships, he was led into the search for some form of basic education for those who could not read. In time he began to concentrate on a cheap and efficient means of educating the young. How, he wondered, could children be

more pleasantly and profitably employed, than in looking at cards and little books, containing their letters and such pious instruction, as are important to be committed to memory. A card, containing the alphabet, is of as much worth

<sup>12</sup> *Pilot*, 21 Oct. 1851.

<sup>13</sup> OSGOOD, *The Canadian Visitor*, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> *York Gazette*, 9 Mar. 1809.

<sup>15</sup> See for example P.A.C., MG24, B1, Vol. 2, pp. 146-7, Osgood to Neilson, 21 Dec. 1809; P.A.C., RG4, A1, Vol. 106, pp. 33593-5, Osgood to Craig, 21 Dec. 1809; P.A.C., MG24, B1, Vol. 2, pp. 225-6, Osgood to Rev. Dr. Spark, 18 Nov. 1811; *Quebec Gazette*, 19 Oct. 1809; *Quebec Mercury*, 23 Oct. 1809, 20 Aug. 1810, 30 Sept. 1811; *York Gazette*, 14 Nov. 1810.

to the little child as a book that would cost a shilling; for the book would be spoiled in learning the letters, when a card worth one copper, would serve the child just as well. Thus we may see the good effects of sending such small pieces into the new settlements, where books are scarce, and the means of obtaining them small.<sup>16</sup>

Increasingly convinced that literacy was a necessary corollary to moral improvement, Osgood enlarged the scope of his designs to include a book company to print and purchase tracts for circulating libraries, schools, and private distribution,<sup>17</sup> and spoke of a "good school in every town."<sup>18</sup>

This new interest in literacy led him naturally into one of the great enthusiasms of the age. By 1812 he was preoccupied with the problem of how to teach the "three R's" to as many children as possible, as cheaply as possible. In the monitorial school movement he perceived a solution. For some time such schools had been gaining adherents in Britain; both Joseph Lancaster and his Anglican rivals had already shown how hundreds of poor children could be taught by one master through his student monitors. News of this innovation had reached the colonies in the early years of the century.<sup>19</sup> Osgood was not a man to ignore the "very latest in educational improvements,"<sup>20</sup> and little considering its suitability for a country with a widely scattered population, he took up the cause of monitorial schools.

It was this new enthusiasm that led him to make his first expedition to Britain. The outbreak of war in 1812 caused him to feel his way "being hedged up" as an American preacher, and he may have left the Canadas out of sheer prudence.<sup>21</sup> But he also needed financial and institutional support of a kind he had hitherto lacked. Abroad, the spirit of evangelicalism ran high, and he had a likelier chance of tapping enthusiasts for funds to support colonial schools. In Britain, too, he hoped to take advantage of the new-found instrument of the age, the benevolent association. Philanthropists and social reformers were discovering that a voluntary association of charitable persons might be the means of doing good in almost every worthwhile cause: assisting the poor, the heathen, the emigrant, reforming the criminal, providing food and clothing, mental cultivation and moral uplift. If Osgood could enlist influential men in such an association, he would have not only institutional backing but a reputation for respectability that might win him the support of the Canadian colonists.

He had little difficulty gaining assistance, both moral and practical. In his five years in the Canadas Osgood had in fact made some well-placed

<sup>16</sup> *Quebec Gazette*, 26 Oct. 1809.

<sup>17</sup> P.A.C., MG24, B1, Vol 2, pp. 225-6, Osgood to Rev. Dr. Spark, 18 Nov. 1811.

<sup>18</sup> *Quebec Gazette*, 26 Oct. 1809.

<sup>19</sup> See for example "New Plan of Education", *Quebec Mercury*, 9 Dec. 1805, 23 Feb. 1807.

<sup>20</sup> W.A.C. STEWART and W.P. McCANN, *The Educational Innovators, 1750-1880* (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 58.

<sup>21</sup> *Montreal Register*, 6 Nov. 1845. His citizenship may have aroused suspicions before 1812; see his disclaimers in P.A.C., RG4, A1, Vol. 106, pp. 33593-5, Osgood to Craig, 21 Dec. 1809.

connections who were most useful to him. Sir George Prevost, for example, advanced £ 50 and a free passage across the Atlantic,<sup>22</sup> while the Rev. C.J. Stewart<sup>23</sup> provided letters of introduction to his brother the Earl of Galloway and others,<sup>24</sup> so that Osgood had immediate access to powerful men. In two years of stumping through "Scotland, Ireland, and all the most populous English towns"<sup>25</sup> he collected over £ 1700 and apparently presented a convincing case for monitorial schools in the Canadas.<sup>26</sup> In May 1814, at Osgood's prompting, an English society, the Committee for Promoting the Education of the Poor in Upper and Lower Canada, was formed. Its members included a cross-section of English evangelicals, both Anglican and dissenters: William Allen, the well-known Quaker philanthropist and reformer, sat on the executive committee, but among the society's subscribers were Anglican bishops and aristocrats. Laying aside their sectarian differences, they agreed to support a nondenominational system of colonial schools, a system modelled after Joseph Lancaster's non-sectarian schools rather than those supported by the National Society, an Anglican body whose monitorial schools operated on denominational principles. The founders of Osgood's society constituted in effect a board of trustees to hold the funds collected and supervise the establishment of Lancasterian schools in the Canadas. Towards that end they declared themselves "deeply sensible of the value of the indefatigable exertions of the Rev. Thaddeus Osgood in this great work" and designated him their agent in the Canadas.<sup>27</sup>

Upon his return from England in the fall of 1814, Osgood set out to establish branch societies for Lancasterian schools throughout the Canadas.<sup>28</sup> His campaign opened in the town of Quebec, where in his usual manner he made numerous public announcements and private appeals for the scheme.<sup>29</sup> In a remarkably short time a room was fitted up for two hundred students, subjects and hours of instruction were set, pupils enrolled, and the school opened specifically for children "not otherwise furnished with the means of Education," including those of the city's garrison as well as its poor.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Prevost to Osgood, 17 Oct. 1812 (copy enclosed in Public Record Office [P.R.O.], CO42/152, Osgood to Goulburn, 16 Feb. 1813; P.R.O., CO42/159, Osgood to Bathurst, 2 June 1814).

<sup>23</sup> A missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and later second Anglican Bishop of Quebec (1826-37).

<sup>24</sup> T.R. MILLMAN, *The Life of ... Charles James Stewart* (London, Ont.: Huron College, 1953), p. 23; *Montreal Register*, 6 Nov. 1845.

<sup>25</sup> P.A.C., MG24, B1, Vol. 2, pp. 358-9, Osgood to John Neilson, 10 May 1814.

<sup>26</sup> See the *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 22 (June 1814), 236; BRITISH AND FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY, *Report* (London: 1814), p. 15.

<sup>27</sup> P.R.O., CO42/159, Osgood to Bathurst, 2 June 1814. Contributors to the society included Lords Bathurst and Vansittart (Chancellor of the Exchequer), Mrs. Hannah More, two Anglican bishops, and others.

<sup>28</sup> See Spragge for a detailed account of Osgood's monitorial school work in the Canadas.

<sup>29</sup> For example, P.A.C., RG8, Vol. C64, pp. 59-61a, Osgood to Prevost, 14 Oct. 1814; *Quebec Mercury*, 18 Oct. and 25 Oct. 1814.

<sup>30</sup> *Quebec Mercury*, 11 Oct. 1814; P.A.C., RG4, B30, Vol. 4, p. 1, Osgood to Prevost, 4 Mar. 1815.

At first the Quebec Free School appeared to be on a sound footing.<sup>31</sup> But Osgood was tilting at some rather formidable windmills. In accordance with the Lancasterian rules and his own preference, he maintained a rigid non-sectarianism in the school: denominational instruction was allowed only on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, when the children were required to "go to their religious teachers to attend to such catechisms and instructions as may be agreeable to their respective parents and guardians."<sup>32</sup> Neither Catholic nor Anglican establishment however was willing to allow such free-thinking to go unchecked. The two Canadian bishops were offended by Osgood's blithe assumption of their support — without so much as asking their leave he had seen to their nomination by the London society as trustees for the school. They were each uncompromisingly set against nondenominational education, a position echoed by Governor Prevost in a letter declining his own nomination as patron: "Religion should be the basis of all education ... the plan of bringing up children without an attachment to the principles of any particular Church, will almost invariably issue in their possessing, when launched abroad into the World, little or no principle at all."<sup>33</sup> Moreover, something about Osgood, whether his dissenting beliefs or his personal style, aroused doubts, and malicious gossip undermined his efforts.<sup>34</sup> John Mure, a Quebec merchant and member of the Legislative Assembly, and a supporter of Osgood, had to admit that Osgood was "looked on with a Suspicious eye by both the Catholics and Episcopalians many of whom declare that were he not of the Committee they would give every encouragement to the undertaking," although he added hastily that "Mr. Osgood's conduct so far as known to me has been that of an honest man."<sup>35</sup> In the face of official disapproval the school's enrolment melted away and for a few months, indeed, disappeared altogether. Reorganization on a new site revived the school temporarily. But the transfer of many of the children to a newly-established garrison school,<sup>36</sup> and the continuing hostility of the religious establishment, doomed the Québec Free School to a lingering existence until it closed for good in 1817.<sup>37</sup>

At the same time as he was fighting for the Quebec school, Osgood was attempting to create similar schools elsewhere in the Canadas. But despite the enthusiastic reception which he reported in the Eastern Townships, little of consequence developed: one or two youths were sent to the Quebec school to train as teachers in a method ill-suited to rural communi-

<sup>31</sup> See an account of the school's history in *Quebec Gazette*, 28 Dec. 1815.

<sup>32</sup> *Quebec Mercury*, 18 Oct. 1814.

<sup>33</sup> P.A.C., MG24, B1, Vol. 20, pp. 83-5, Robert Loring to John Mure, 22 May 1815. Mure was one of the school's supporters.

<sup>34</sup> See for example, *Quebec Gazette*, 5 and 12 Oct. 1815.

<sup>35</sup> P.A.C., MG24, B1, Vol. 20, pp. 77-80, John Mure to John Inglis, 15 May 1815.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Osgood also tried (but failed) to establish a girls' monitorial school in Quebec; he did open briefly an adult evening school attached to the boys' school. *Quebec Mercury*, 22 Nov. 1814.

ties.<sup>38</sup> For a brief time he established a monitorial school in Montreal,<sup>39</sup> and he allotted small sums of money to schools at Lorette (an Indian settlement) and other villages on the misguided assumption that monitorial schools could flourish there.<sup>40</sup> In the one significant school movement outside Quebec in which he had a hand, great difficulties arose; and while the school of the Midland District School Society in Kingston did not owe its problems solely to Osgood's assistance, neither did it develop along the lines he envisaged.<sup>41</sup> In 1814 Osgood had helped raise a subscription towards a schoolhouse and master's salary. Although the organizational stages went smoothly, considerable difficulty was experienced in converting subscriptions into cash. The Society therefore languished until in the fall of 1817 it finally acquired enough money to run the school and hire a schoolmaster, Robert Johnston, from the newly defunct Quebec Free School. For a year the Kingston school operated as a nondenominational school, but with increasing acrimony between Johnston and the Society. Eventually Johnston resigned, or was fired (depending on whose version is adopted). For some months the school endured another master — a professional surveyor who had "occasionally been employed as a School Master & is in some degree acquainted with the National System of Education."<sup>42</sup> Once the National System (the Anglican monitorial school system) had been introduced, its supporters had the edge. With the additional advantage of funding from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, they succeeded in changing the school from a nondenominational operation into one in which Church of England doctrines were taught.<sup>43</sup> Osgood's original aim was defeated.

Undaunted, he consoled himself with other duties. For some time he boarded with George Spratt, a Congregational minister in Quebec,<sup>44</sup> and occasionally attended to Spratt's church and Sunday school.<sup>45</sup> He busied himself with travelling and collecting funds for books and schools, and for two years taught a government-supported school in Stanstead, in the Eastern Townships.<sup>46</sup> The grand scheme of monitorial schools was, for the time being, a dead issue.

Thwarted in one good cause, Osgood simply turned to another. As Allan Greer has recently pointed out, one thrust of evangelicalism in this

<sup>38</sup> P.A.C., MG24, B1, Vol. 3, pp. 5-7, Moses Nichols to John Neilson, Jan. 1816; OSGOOD, *The Canadian Visitor*, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> P.A.C., RG4, B30, Vol. 4, p. 1, Osgood to Prevost, 4 Mar. 1815.

<sup>40</sup> P.A.C., MG24, B1, Vol 2, pp. 510-11, Osgood to J. Neilson, 8 June 1815.

<sup>41</sup> For accounts of the first years of this school, see J.G. HODGINS, ed., *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada* (Toronto: 1893-1904), I, 89-93; P.A.C., RG5, A1, Vol. 41, pp. 19719-25, R. Glastor to Hillier, 28 Nov. 1818; Spragge, pp. 117-23; Queen's University Archives, Midland District School Society Minutes.

<sup>42</sup> P.A.C., RG5, A1, Vol. 41, pp. 19719-25, R. Glastor to Hillier, 28 Nov. 1818.

<sup>43</sup> Queen's University Archives, Midland District School Society Minutes, 3 Jan. 1819 and 10 May 1819.

<sup>44</sup> He later became an Anglican minister.

<sup>45</sup> London Missionary Society Archives, Box 1, Folder 8, Jacket C, G. Spratt to Rev. Tracey, 15 Mar. 1815, and Osgood to Rev. George Burder, 20 May 1815.

<sup>46</sup> *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada*, 1819, Appendix E.

period was towards the creation of Sunday schools, and Osgood was quick to latch on to it.<sup>47</sup> Even while he had been concentrating on day schools he had recognized the imperative need to supplement these efforts in other ways. Moreover, like many another pioneer preacher, he chose to see all about him the evidence of wickedness, "Sabbath-breaking, and every species of immorality."<sup>48</sup> Over the next decade, taking advantage of an increasing evangelical fervour in the Canadas, he devoted his full energies to promoting Sunday schools and tract societies. In the former work he was a pioneer, establishing the first Sunday schools in Stanstead and York as well as others in the two provinces.<sup>49</sup> Like his day schools, the Sunday schools he created were non-denominational: "not a syllable of any thing sectarian is taught the children; nothing is brought before them but such truths and duties as the great body of Christians of almost all denominations cordially receive."<sup>50</sup> But whereas his monitorial schools had met instant hostility, the Sunday schools did not attempt to include Roman Catholics and were supported by Protestants of various denominations, caught up like Osgood in one of the enthusiasms of the age.

Enlarging on this work, Osgood set out to create a Sunday School Union Society to unite all the supporters of Sunday schools in a common effort to reach the children of every Protestant sect. The degree of success he met indicates a widespread readiness to co-operate in this venture.<sup>51</sup> In the early 1820s Sunday School Union Societies were established with Osgood's encouragement at Quebec,<sup>52</sup> Kingston,<sup>53</sup> York and Montreal,<sup>54</sup> and Niagara.<sup>55</sup> Their aims were to form local Sunday schools and to obtain suitable books for circulation among them. For the latter purpose, Osgood's contacts with English and American tract societies were useful. At the same time as he was promoting Sunday schools, he established himself as the agent for local tract societies and as their link to their parent bodies, as well as the procurer of funds and books for them in his own right.<sup>56</sup>

In the midst of this work, Osgood's concern for educational improvement revived in the form of a desire to establish an institution "for training

<sup>47</sup> Allan GREER, "The Sunday Schools of Upper Canada", *Ontario History*, LXVII (Sept. 1975), 169-184.

<sup>48</sup> *Upper Canada Gazette*, 12 Dec. 1822.

<sup>49</sup> *The Harbinger*, Vol. 1, No. 7, 15 July 1842; J.W. GRANT, ed., *Salvation! O The Joyful Sound* (Toronto: 1967), pp. 130-1; SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION, *The Centenary of Sunday Schools, 1880* (London: 1881), pp. 50-1; P.A.C., MG24, D8, Vol. 9, pp. 2998-9, Osgood to P. Wright, 3 Aug. 1822; *Upper Canada Gazette*, 22 July 1824.

<sup>50</sup> *Quebec Mercury*, 17 Dec. 1822.

<sup>51</sup> For examples of co-operative sentiment see *Kingston Chronicle*, 22 and 29 Jan. 1819, 11 Mar. 1825; NIAGARA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, *Notes on Niagara*, No. 32, p. 37.

<sup>52</sup> *Quebec Mercury*, 17 Dec. 1822.

<sup>53</sup> *Kingston Chronicle*, 9 Nov. 1821.

<sup>54</sup> *Upper Canada Gazette*, 12 Dec. 1822, 11 Dec. 1823.

<sup>55</sup> *Niagara Gleaner*, 11 Dec. 1824.

<sup>56</sup> See for example *Quebec Mercury*, 21 Sept. 1824; *Niagara Gleaner*, 13 Nov. 1824; P.A.C., RG5, A1, Vol. 70, pp. 36990-93, Osgood to Hillier, 7 Jan. 1825; Religious Tract Society, *21st Annual Report* (London, 1820), pp. x-xi; P.A.C., MG24, D8, Vol. 9, pp. 3019-24, Osgood to P. Wright, 17 and 18 Oct. 1822; *Kingston Chronicle*, 3 Nov. 1822 and 12 Jan. 1827.

up suitable teachers for the Indian tribes and the new settlements of Canada."<sup>57</sup> In search of the requisite funds for its support he set off once again for Britain, in the spring of 1825, armed with his usual array of testimonials. At first he was in some confusion over the exact form of his proposal, but eventually he arrived at a programme calculated to appeal to as wide an audience as possible: a system of schools for Indians and poor settlers which would blend manual labour with elementary education in an atmosphere of "love rather than harsh discipline", and which would also train teachers to set up similar schools for the poor.<sup>58</sup> It was as detailed a blueprint as Osgood would ever produce for public approval. Perhaps this was natural, for apart from the inclusion of physical work the plan aimed at much the same thing as had the society he had established ten years before, and for which he had collected money from the same people.

His reception on this second visit to Britain was, however, quite extraordinary. In 1825 at a London meeting chaired by His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, the Society for Promoting Education and Industry was formed, with an impressive list of officers and subscribers.<sup>59</sup> Lord Bexley, a well-known philanthropist and former Chancellor of the Exchequer, set the tone of the meeting in a speech noting the special needs of the colonies: "in the savage state, each man is dependent on his individual exertions; he must know how to handle the axe, and build himself a house. Industry, therefore, must be combined with mental cultivation..."<sup>60</sup>

As the official agent of the new society, Osgood applied himself to collecting funds and forming local auxiliary groups throughout the country to channel money towards the main chapter in London. At the same time he bombarded the Colonial Office with requests for interviews, financial aid, and approval, and with page after verbose page of descriptions of his work in the Canadas and his new scheme. Lord Bathurst more than once declined to be president of the new society and maintained his customary composure in the face of ceaseless solicitations.<sup>61</sup> But lack of official government support did not mean that Osgood lacked approval. As Lord Bexley pointed out at a subsequent meeting, "one of the best modes of securing to the parent country the esteem and co-operation of our colonies, is to enlighten their minds and show them how much greater are the advantages they derive from connexion with us, than they could expect from attaching themselves to any other Government, or setting up a weak and feeble government of their own."<sup>62</sup> By 1826 the combination of British benevolence and self-interest had provided the organization, funds, and good-

<sup>57</sup> P.A.C., RG5, A1, Vol. 70, pp. 36990-93, Osgood to Hillier, 7 Jan. 1825.

<sup>58</sup> P.R.O., CO42/206, Osgood to Bathurst, 16 June 1825.

<sup>59</sup> See report of meeting in *Colonial Advocate*, 11 May 1826. Patrons included the Duke of Sussex, Lord Bishops of Durham and Salisbury, Lords Calthorpe and Gambier (both noted for philanthropic endeavours), Williams Wilberforce, Edward Ellice.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Preferring to vent his exasperation privately in a note to his assistant Wilmot Horton: "Would not [Osgood's] seeing [the Indians'] Great Grandfather Mr. Horton do as well as seeing their great father King George... the latter he certainly will not see." P.R.O., CO 42/210, Osgood to Bathurst, 1 July 1826.

<sup>62</sup> *The Times*, 30 June 1826, p. 3, col. c.

will that sent Osgood back to the Canadas as agent of the London Society, along with two schoolmasters trained in the Lancasterian method.

Charged with establishing branch organizations for the supervision of local activities, "to be composed of pious and benevolent persons of all religious denominations,"<sup>63</sup> Osgood called a meeting in Montreal to form the Central Auxiliary Society for promoting education and industry. As in London a number of the more respectable and noted citizens became officers.<sup>64</sup> In the next few months other auxiliary societies were formed (at Cornwall, Brockville, York, Kingston, and Quebec)<sup>65</sup> and female societies created to provide clothing and establish girls' schools at the same places.<sup>66</sup> The fledgling organization was blessed with the support of a wide range of the two provinces' élite, including Governor-General Dalhousie, whose wife graced the Montreal Ladies' Society, and who entirely approved the scheme provided there would be no interference with the work of the Catholic church.<sup>67</sup>

More than the structure of organization was necessary for success, and at this point Osgood's plans began to fall apart.<sup>68</sup> The schoolhouse at Kingston which he had assumed to be ready for use as a central training school turned out, on inspection, to be already occupied. When in the spring of 1827 it was finally vacated, he sent Mr. Hawker, one of the masters imported from England, to begin a new school on the Lancasterian mode. Hawker proved most unsuitable and was dismissed within the year for "improper conduct," and the school was closed.<sup>69</sup>

The second object of the society, the education of the Indians, fared little better. The Montreal committee established a school at Caughnawaga attended at first by over one hundred children. Then enrolment dropped disastrously. In the same spirit of opposition that had undermined the chances of the Quebec Free School ten years before, the Roman Catholic curé simply refused to countenance a godless school. To the Montreal committee's troubleshooters his superiors explained that "to provide Children with an education not founded on true and sound principles, is worse than to give them none at all."<sup>70</sup> The situation was retrieved only

<sup>63</sup> P.R.O., CO42/210, Report of the meeting of the committee of the society for promoting education and industry in Canada, 19 July 1826.

<sup>64</sup> See OSGOOD, *The Canadian Visitor*, pp. 11-13; *The First Annual Report of the Central Auxiliary Society* (Montreal: 1827), pp. iii-ix. Members of the new society included Frederick Ermatinger (Sheriff of Montreal district), Horatio Gates, William Lunn, J. Mondellet, Lt. Col. W. MacKay (Superintendent of Western Indians).

<sup>65</sup> *Colonial Advocate*, 21 and 28 Dec. 1826; *Kingston Chronicle*, 5 Jan. 1827; *The First Annual Report of the Central Auxiliary Society*, p. 16; *Quebec Mercury*, 6 Mar. 1827.

<sup>66</sup> *The First Annual Report of the Central Auxiliary Society*, p. 16; *Kingston Chronicle*, 5 Jan. 1827; *The Albion*, 11 Nov. 1826.

<sup>67</sup> Noted in P.A.C., RG4, Al, Vol. S-185, p. 45, Osgood to Dalhousie, 19 Feb. 1827. Subscribers to the society included William Allen and Hugh Carfrae (*Colonial Advocate*, 28 Dec. 1826), C.A. Hagerman and John Strachan (*Kingston Chronicle*, 5 Jan. 1827).

<sup>68</sup> For a detailed account of the Society's fortunes, see Spragge, pp. 125-213.

<sup>69</sup> Osgood, *The Canadian Visitor*, p. 55.

<sup>70</sup> Bishop of Telmesse to McCulloch and Fisher, 29 Jan. 1827, enclosed in P.A.C., RG4, Al, Vol. S-185, items 4-8, McCulloch and Fisher to Dalhousie, 1 Feb. 1827.

slightly when the people a few miles away at Chateauguay, "being sensible of the benefits of an English education,"<sup>71</sup> formed a local committee and applied to Montreal to have the Caughnawaga schoolmaster sent to them.

Two years later, in 1829, the Chateauguay school was still open, and Osgood could report other minor accomplishments: assistance to several schools supported by local initiative; the creation of an infant school in Montreal; a short-lived attempt at a school of industry in Lorette, and a longer-lasting one in Montreal.<sup>72</sup> But a system of monitorial schools throughout the colonies had not been achieved. Moreover, the Society for Promoting Education and Industry was struggling with internal dissension. According to Osgood, communications between the Montreal committee and London had been unintentionally interrupted with the result that "distrust and suspicion arose on the part of the Parent Society," to the point that the English trustees protested a bill drawn on them. Osgood personally assumed a £ 100 debt and to discharge it was forced to resort to the charity of American friends.<sup>73</sup>

At the same time Osgood was encountering similar difficulties with the Sunday school and tract work he had continued to pursue throughout the decade. Sectarian squabbles, rumours of mishandling of funds, bitter attacks in public and private on Osgood's character and activities: these were the unholy crop he reaped.

### III

What had gone wrong? One cause of Osgood's troubles was his personal style. The evangelical enthusiasm which accompanied his message of salvation was more to the liking of the untutored farmers who flocked to camp meetings than to the sober Presbyterian or Anglican community to which he looked for much of his support. Osgood often raised the hackles of the more conservative and dignified members of colonial society. In their eyes his manner of preaching was enough to make him an object of ridicule, as one acerbic Scot reported:

The Rev. Thaddeus Osgood passed through this place [Kingston] a few days ago, on his way to preach the Gospel and sow the seeds of knowledge and wisdom in the upper parts of the Province... He staid a few days at this place with the brethern and on the first day of the week preached to the Christians who assembled like doves to their windows for to hear him. And it was evident that the downpouring was great, for Thaddeus spake as a mighty man and would not be silent. And lo, when the sun went down, and all the wild geese by the great waters had gone to sleep Thaddeus still continued to speak and the Saints were edified and comforted. And he arose early next morning and saddled his ass and went on his way rejoicing.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup> *The First Annual Report of the Central Auxiliary Society*, p. 14.

<sup>72</sup> *The Second Annual Report of the Central Auxiliary Society*, pp. viii-ix and 13-15; Osgood, *The Canadian Visitor*, pp. 52-62; United Church Archives, London Missionary Society, T. Osgood, "Respected Friend," 18 March 1829.

<sup>73</sup> Thaddeus OSGOOD, *A Brief Extract from the Journal of Thaddeus Osgood* (Montreal, 1841), pp. 4-5.

<sup>74</sup> Metropolitan Toronto Central Library, Wilkie Papers, John Whitelaw to Daniel Wilkie, 9 July 1815.

In England he offended Anglican clergymen and disturbed the peace.<sup>75</sup> He even managed to antagonize other Congregationalists; his "moderate Calvinist" preaching caused a serious rift between members of a church in Stanstead.<sup>76</sup>

Moreover, he was careless in his organizational techniques. On his rather convoluted progress through a long string of charitable enterprises, he seems to have kept few books, and the sketchy accounts he gave of fund-raising and spending aroused suspicions in some quarters. Whether these suspicions were well-founded or not, they gave rise to charges of misappropriation of funds that sometimes implied outright swindling of the public. On many occasions Osgood complained long and indignantly of the falsity of such attacks; he could do no more to clear himself, however, than assert his honesty. And accusations of mishandling public money were followed by complaints of misrepresentation. To his alarm, an Anglican clergyman at Kingston found that Osgood had been using his name to further his own ends "beyond the point he was authorized to do."<sup>77</sup> The charge was repeated by other respectable persons.<sup>78</sup> It was all too true that Osgood was inclined to misuse his patrons' names, especially if he calculated that they would lend respectability to his proposals. He had an unfortunate habit, for instance, of advertising the names of nominees to his committees rather ambiguously as if they had already accepted, a far from automatic process.<sup>79</sup> The charge of misrepresentation lay uncomfortably near the truth.

By far the greatest problem, however, was that Osgood was attempting to swim against the tide of denominationalism. By the late 1820s the colonial churches were engaged in constructing their own religious and benevolent institutions, notably in the form of denominational Sunday schools and missionary societies.<sup>80</sup> Osgood, on the other hand, insisted that all Christians should unite in good works, and he repeatedly ran afoul of sectarian sentiment. The Rev. G. O. Stuart, for example, was happy to support Osgood's benevolent work among the Indians and settlers in places devoid of all religious institutions, but he would not condone what he saw as interference in established denominational affairs. Shortly after becoming president of the Sunday School Union Society of Upper Canada, he accused Osgood of disrupting an Anglican Sunday school "for the purpose of disunion and disorganization and the suppression of the

<sup>75</sup> *Colonial Advocate*, 17 Dec. 1829; *Christian Guardian*, 23 Jan. 1830.

<sup>76</sup> John WOOD, *Memoir of Henry Wilkes* (Montreal: 1887), p. 21; *The Harbinger*, Vol. 1, No. 7, 15 July 1842; *Canadian Independent*, XIII (Jan. 1867): 283.

<sup>77</sup> P.A.C., RG5, A1, Vol. 58, p. 30576, G.O. Stuart to Hillier, 23 Dec. 1822.

<sup>78</sup> See enclosures in P.A.C., S.P.G. Records, "C" MSS, Rev. J. Wenham to S.P.G., 22 Jan. 1827; P.A.C., RG5, B11, Vol. 3, Wenham to Hillier, 12 Dec. 1826.

<sup>79</sup> See complaints made, *ibid.*; also *Brockville Recorder*, 11 Dec. 1826.

<sup>80</sup> Such as the Anglican "Society for converting and civilizing the Indians"; for denominational Sunday schools, see *Christian Guardian*, 2 Jan. 1830; *Kingston Chronicle*, 18 Mar. 1825; I. FIDLER, *Observations on Professions, Literature, Manners and Emigration in the United States and Canada* (London: 1833), p. 330; *Brockville Recorder*, 23 May 1834; *Christian Guardian*, 14 Jan. 1835.

Catechism of the Church of England.”<sup>81</sup> Osgood protested that he had merely “put the school upon its original plan” of nonsectarian instruction; but whether due to Stuart’s influence or not, by mid-decade he was being accused of having subverted *three* Anglican Sunday schools.<sup>82</sup> A York benevolent society for the relief of distressed emigrants similarly refused to join forces with Osgood on the grounds that his plans were distinctly unsound on religious matters.<sup>83</sup> The Roman Catholic hierarchy had from the first eschewed his ideas, benevolent or not.

By the end of the 1820s, then, Osgood was left with an organization in ruins and a badly discredited reputation. He resolved to visit England again in order to clear his name and if possible patch up the rift between the British and Canadian branches of his educational society. The first he managed with partial success; the second goal was beyond hope. No possibility remained of mending the sectarian divisions that had arisen in the colonies, or of calming suspicions of colonial squandering of British funds. Osgood resigned as agent, and the second great committee of his career passed unnoticed into oblivion.

With unabashed optimism, however, Osgood spent the next six years in Britain supporting half a dozen causes, each more idealistic than the last. In an early petition to the King he asked for aid for a “very necessary building where Bibles, Elementary books, and Clothing for Indians and emigrants may be stored” and where “a place of instruction for Seamen and others doing business on the waters of the St. Lawrence” might be provided.<sup>84</sup> He took up the theme of the needy seamen and emigrants again in a detailed plan for a Union Building to house a book depository, meeting and reading rooms, and a place for worship, all for the edification of these travellers.<sup>85</sup> Another scheme involved amelioration of the lot of the unemployed in Canada “by uniting Christian instruction with manual labor” — a variation of the house of industry theme.<sup>86</sup> Enlarging on the same idea, he suggested that English paupers might be settled on Canadian lands under his supervision.<sup>87</sup> Yet other proposals expounded the cause, once more, of teacher training and education for the Indians and destitute settlers, and observed the need for physical labour, Sunday schools, “*portable, lending, and circulating Libraries*,” Lancasterian infant schools, and the observance of the Sabbath.<sup>88</sup> Taking a leaf from Robert Owen’s works, he called for “relief unions:” institutions providing shelter and uncultivated land for the relief and employment of the poor. He did not, however, endorse the whole of that gentleman’s proposal. “Let it be

<sup>81</sup> P.A.C., RG5, A1, Vol. 60, pp. 32129-32, G.O. Stuart to Hillier, 28 June 1823.

<sup>82</sup> *Colonial Advocate*, 21 June 1827; P.A.C., RG5, A1, Vol. 70, pp. 36994-98, Osgood to Hillier, 8 Jan. 1825.

<sup>83</sup> *Kingston Chronicle*, 26 Jan. 1827.

<sup>84</sup> P.R.O., CO42/231, Osgood to Murray, 13 Jan. 1830.

<sup>85</sup> P.R.O., CO42/231, Osgood to Murray, 22 Mar. 1830.

<sup>86</sup> P.R.O., CO42/231, Osgood to Murray, 16 Jan. 1830.

<sup>87</sup> P.A.C., RG7, G1, Vol. 20, p. 306, Hay to Kempt, 28 Feb. 1830, enclosing Osgood to Murray, 16 Jan. 1830.

<sup>88</sup> P.R.O., CO42/231, Osgood to Murray, 22 Mar. 1830.

distinctly understood," ran Osgood's version, "that this design is not to interfere in matters of religion, or family relations, as Mr. Owen's scheme sets forth." Moreover, the paupers were to be "favoured with gratuitous Instruction from the Bible, morning, noon, and night, daily."<sup>89</sup>

By some inscrutable process the assortment of schemes to alleviate poverty and cultivate godliness had, by 1835, boiled down to one. Late in the year Osgood returned to the Canadas in order to establish a building for the moral instruction and care of seamen and emigrants. In six months, he had won round most of the dissenting ministers of Montreal. A founding meeting in June 1836 created the "Friendly Union," a nondenominational body whose purpose was to erect such a building for the "suppression of vice and the promotion of useful knowledge." The group expressed particular concern over the condition of children in the poorer sections of the city, and proposed a juvenile union for those under fourteen.<sup>90</sup> It was, indeed, an urban organization aimed at amelioration of the growing social problems of the city. Osgood had discovered his new frontier: urban problems would be his major preoccupation for the rest of his life.

With the enthusiastic support of his fellow clergymen, Osgood attempted to get financial aid for the building of their shelter. Endless petitions went to Gosford, then to Buller, later to Bagot, Metcalfe, Elgin; a decade of petitions for aid for a piece of land on which to build, for an adequate building, for the Union's work.<sup>91</sup> The government was not interested. Osgood and his associates were forced to rely on the private donations that trickled in from his invaluable contacts in the United States and England and from local people. At first a temporary awning near the waterfront housed the services conducted by different members of the Montreal Protestant clergy; then in 1837 a small building was erected.<sup>92</sup> Sometimes called the "Bethel," this structure soon served as a place of worship, reading room, and Sunday school.

Among the Union's enterprises was a School of Industry which opened in the Bethel in 1838 with an enrolment of over fifty children of both sexes.<sup>93</sup> Osgood had previously met little success in establishing industrial shelters.<sup>94</sup> But the Bethel institution continued for over a decade; by 1851

<sup>89</sup> P.R.O., CO42/231, Osgood to Hay, 28 Dec. 1830; Osgood, *A Brief Extract*, pp. 7-16.

<sup>90</sup> P.A.C., RG4, Al, Vol. S-405, pp. 10-11, Osgood to Buller, 16 Aug. 1838; P.R.O., CO42/305, Osgood to Labouchere, 27 Feb. 1839. Ministers included H. Esson (Presbyterian Church), Henry Wilkes (Congregational Church), W. Taylor (Secession Church), N. Bosworth (Baptist Church), R.L. Lusher (Wesleyan Church).

<sup>91</sup> For example, P.A.C., RG4, Al, Vol. S-384, p. 52, Osgood to Gosford, 4 July 1837; P.A.C., RG4, Al, Vol. S-405, pp. 10-11, Osgood to Buller, 16 Aug. 1838; P.A.C., RG4, Al, Vol. 58, No. 468, Osgood to Bagot, 10 Feb. 1842; P.A.C., RG5, Cl, Vol. 112, No. 6173, Osgood to Metcalfe, 28 July 1843; P.A.C., RG4, Cl, Vol. 223, No. 1407, Osgood to Elgin, 1 May 1848.

<sup>92</sup> P.A.C., RG4, Al, Vol. S-381, p. 239, Osgood to Gosford, 18 May 1837; P.A.C., RG4, Al, Vol. S-405, pp. 10-11, Osgood to Buller, 16 Aug. 1838.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

over 2800 children were reported to have used its facilities at one time or another.<sup>95</sup> The term "school of industry" was somewhat misleading, however. Such schools had indeed existed in Britain for many years; their purpose was to train the poor in various manual pursuits, generally of a very simple and make-work sort. The intellectual education they offered was scanty and of secondary importance. Like these schools, the Bethel shelter catered to the children of the poor and unemployed, the cast-offs of society. But it soon lost its "industrial" function — no manual work seems to have been introduced — and under Osgood's supervision the education it purveyed was extremely rudimentary. More attention was paid to moral improvement than to the "three R's." The Bethel did not operate without interruption (in winter it closed for lack of adequate facilities) nor did its pupils attend for long. It was not so much a school, in fact, as a shelter for the children who would otherwise have swelled the troublesome throngs of street urchins whose presence in the mid-century Canadian city was a cause of growing concern.<sup>96</sup> As one of Osgood's associates argued, institutions like the Bethel "would be a blessing, though they did no more than take the children from the streets and places of dissipation, which, in this city, are very numerous..."<sup>97</sup>

For the remainder of his life, Osgood continued to support the work of his Montreal association, ignoring the infirmities of increasing age. Three more times he made the perilous journey across the Atlantic to Britain in search of funds and support.<sup>98</sup> And in the 1830s and '40s he discovered a new cause: the temperance movement. In many of his messages to the public the need for temperance was underlined, particularly as he became more familiar with the social evils of the city. Temperance was a popular theme of the day, and Osgood tended to tag it onto other ideas regardless of its appropriateness. On the one hand, he saw it as part of the general attack on moral depravity and a useful tool to the religious leader: "Bible, Sunday school, Tract, and Temperance Societies... are most powerful auxiliaries and helps to the preaching of the gospel."<sup>99</sup> On the other hand, temperance might aid the fruition of almost any good work; for example, if paupers were settled on colonial lands by a benevolent government and strict temperance enforced, "crimes and suffering would cease." Such a plan, indeed, would have prevented the rebellions in Canada.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>94</sup> An ill-fated attempt was made in Quebec in 1816; see *Quebec Gazette*, 4 Jan. 1816. The house of industry established more than a decade later in Montreal seems to have been short-lived; see *The Second Annual Report of the Central Auxiliary Society* (1829), pp. 13-15 and accounts.

<sup>95</sup> *Pilot*, 21 Oct. 1851.

<sup>96</sup> See Susan HOUSTON, "Victorian Origins of Juvenile Delinquency: a Canadian Experience," *History of Education Quarterly*, 12 (Fall 1972): 254-280.

<sup>97</sup> P.A.C., RG4, A1, Vol. S-405, pp. 10-11, Osgood to Buller, 16 Aug. 1838.

<sup>98</sup> In 1838, 1844, and 1848.

<sup>99</sup> *St. Catharines Journal*, 25 Jan. 1838.

<sup>100</sup> P.A.C., MGII, Vol. 269, pt. 2, pp. 251-3, unsigned petition from Osgood, 22 Feb. 1839. See also for his advocacy of temperance, letters in *Montreal Witness*, 15 June 1846, 6 Nov. 1848; *Canada Temperance Advocate*, 1 June 1842.

In the fall of 1851, Osgood set out once again on his thirteenth trip to Britain in search of funds. The *Scottish Guardian* gave him a fitting welcome: "Mr. Osgood is too well known and highly respected here for his Christian simplicity of character, and his untiring zeal and activity in the philanthropic cause to which he has devoted a long life, to require any commendation from us."<sup>101</sup> But the long voyage across the Atlantic was his last. Thaddeus Osgood died in Glasgow on January 19, 1852.<sup>102</sup>

#### IV

The colonial world noted his passing and then forgot him. Little of his work outlived him. Even in his prime he had lacked the ability to create cohesive and functioning organizations and the denominational ties that might have ensured their survival. Without institutional support, he acted largely outside the effective channels of colonial society, and consequently much of his work depended for its continuance upon his own extraordinary personality. Moreover, he forfeited support by appealing for nonsectarianism at a time when the pioneer phase of interdenominational cooperation was ending, while the effectiveness of his work was limited by his personal eccentricities.

This catalogue of failure, however, should not be allowed to obscure the light his career casts on the energy and enthusiasm of early evangelicalism. Admittedly, his wilder schemes smacked of the extremist fringe, but nineteenth-century evangelicalism had room for all manner of men; if they made strange bedfellows, that was an indication of the strength of a religious revival that reached into many lives. Indeed, the impact of Osgood's appeal to the religious and benevolent conscience of his listeners may be judged by the success of his fund-raising campaigns. These revealed the extraordinary drawing power of the evangelical call to social action. The English people were particularly willing to give to a remarkable variety of causes, and in fact Osgood's campaigns were a testimony to the depth of English charitable commitment.<sup>103</sup> Although on a much smaller scale, the colonial response to his appeals for charity seems also to have been generous, given the settlers' limited resources and the sectarian demands on their loyalties.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Quoted in *Christian Guardian*, 28 Jan. 1852.

<sup>102</sup> *Christian Guardian*, 25 Feb. 1852.

<sup>103</sup> On this point, see also Fingard, "'Grapes in the Wilderness': The Bible Society."

<sup>104</sup> There are few records of funds raised and spent in the course of Osgood's campaigns; those which do exist, however, indicate that he was able to count on some support from the colonists, either in cash donations and subscriptions or in the form of materials and labour. See for example P.A.C., MG24, B1, Vol. 29, Misc., Statement of the Rev. Thaddeus Osgood's receipts and expenditures, 16 May 1815; *Quebec Mercury*, 30 Nov. and 3 Dec. 1819, 25 Sept. 1824; *Kingston Chronicle*, 29 Nov. 1822; *The First Annual Report of the Central Auxiliary Society*, pp. 36-9; *The Second Annual Report of the Central Auxiliary Society*, pp. 40-2; P.R.O., CO42/231, Osgood to Murray, 22 Mar. 1830; P.A.C., RG4, A1, Vol. S-405, pp. 10-11, Osgood to Buller, 16 Aug. 1838.

Secondly, the record of Osgood's lifelong commitment to spiritual and social welfare documents the way in which, in his time, religious revival and social reform went hand in hand. Reflecting the evangelical thrust of the early nineteenth century, his was an activist faith. Commitment to the improvement of social conditions arose naturally out of a concern with spiritual rectitude; in this respect Osgood was an accurate barometer of his times. His contemporaries tended to view education, temperance, aid to the needy and a variety of other measures as part of a general attack on a spiritual malaise whose cure lay in a reawakening of moral responsibility, both individually and in the social conscience of the community. Although Osgood did not always manage to rally the forces of the community to his particular schemes, it is clear that he was not alone in his concerns.

Such an analysis of the man's career, however, might well have seemed irrelevant to Osgood himself. He wrote the only epitaph he wished to have:

By the donations which I have received many children have been taught to read their Bible and recite large portions of that blessed volume. And by the many thousands of religious books and tracts which I have circulated among seamen and emigrants, I humbly trust, that some have been raised to look to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>105</sup> *Montreal Register*, 6 Nov. 1845.