

H.H. MONTGOMERY—THE MUTTON BIRD BISHOP BY THE REV DR GEOFFREY STEPHENS

Chaplain, The Hutchins School

1985 UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA OCCASIONAL PAPER 39

Wholly set up and printed by the Printing Section, University of Tasmania
February 1985
ISBN 0 85901 263 8

Online reproduction with permission, 2006. <http://anglicanhistory.org>

H.H. Montgomery—The Mutton Bird Bishop is the text of the St Wilfrid's Lecture, sponsored by the Board of Christ College, University of Tasmania and delivered by Rev. Dr Geoffrey Stephens, Chaplain of The Hutchins School, in August 1983. Dr Stephens was sometime Chaplain of Magdalen and Keble Colleges, Oxford. He is presently Canon of St David's Cathedral, Hobart.

Requests for copies of this publication should be addressed to the Registrar, University of Tasmania, Box 252C GPO Hobart, Tasmania 7001.

H.H. MONTGOMERY—THE MUTTON BIRD BISHOP

Thomas Carlyle wrote:

What is all Knowledge too but recorded experience, and a product of history; of which, therefore, the reasoning and belief, no less than action and passion, are essential materials.

He also wrote that 'a well-written Life is almost as rare as a well-spent one.' There is a life to be written of Henry Hutchinson Montgomery—and it will be a good one. On the principle that history makes us wise for the future not clever in the present, there is also much to learn from Bishop Montgomery's episcopate in Tasmania—lessons for a Bishop and his clergy, lessons for laymen and society.

Montgomery was born in 1847 in India and educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge. He was ordained priest in 1872 and served as assistant to F.W. Farrar at St Margaret's Westminster. He had already come under the influence of Farrar at Harrow, where Farrar was a House Master from 1855. The Farrar connection was made even stronger when Montgomery married his daughter Maud in 1881.

Farrar was a 'Broad Church Evangelical' who had a deep appeal to the middle classes, and provoked a storm over his liberal interpretation of Jesus in his *Life of Christ* (1874), and over his doubts about eternal punishment in his *Eternal Hope* (1877). This

liberal theological position is an important element in Montgomery's make up.

Whilst at Harrow, Montgomery first came under the influence of another leader of the 19th century Church. Charles Vaughn was head master of Harrow from 1844-1859 and had left a deep impression on the school. In after years Vaughn became Master of the Temple, and undertook to train men for the ministry. In all over 450 men passed through his influence—one of whom was Montgomery.

Vaughn was a great and polished preacher, upholding the traditional and conservative Christian beliefs against the contemporary critical views. This conservatism is another element within the theological make up of Montgomery.

As if the admixture of Farrar and Vaughn was not enough, there was still one more ingredient. Montgomery also became private [1/2] secretary to Dean Stanley reinforcing his 'Broad Church' position. Stanley consistently defended both the Tractarians and the Liberals, and also emphasised the concept of the national church, represented by a national shrine—Westminster Abbey. Montgomery's theological position was described by the English *Church News* in 1889¹ as 'much the same as that of his respected father-in-law, only less so.'

Like Dean Farrar, Montgomery approached theology from an historical view point. He was not a fundamentalist. He once wrote²:

Some people think that anyone after prayer can explain any part of the Bible without further help. Wide reading of history proves that there are parts of scripture which no one really understands yet.

He accepted the methods of biblical criticism, and welcomed the enlargement of truth that that approach and modern science had brought to the understanding of God³:

Theologians have ever been too chary to learn the truths of science. They have discovered too late that, as all truth is one, they should have welcomed all that every investigator of God's ways in the world has to teach us.

The whole approach which Montgomery espoused was that of men like Benjamin Jowett who had called on theologians to treat the Bible like any other book. He was appalled both at the ignorance of the Bible and of the new ways of looking at it developed in Germany⁴:

Good, well-meaning men, are still walking in the same errors, making theories first, then alarmed because facts will not fit them, then saying the facts are false.

His view of the Church was in line with that of the Tractarians. For him, the Anglican Church was the ancient English Catholic Church. He abhorred the 'intrusion' of both Rome and Dissent as creating unnecessary competition and confusion. He regarded Anglicanism, however, as combining the best principles of both Catholics and Protestants, namely obedience and liberty, and saw it as offering the widest base for eventual Christian unity. This unity would be on the basis of the 1888 Lambeth Quadrilateral—the

¹ *Church News* (England 1889), p. 82.

² *Church News* (Tasmania 1892), p. 679.

³ *Church News* (Tasmania 1891), Supplement, pp. 2 and 3.

⁴ *Church News* (Tasmania 1892), p. 681.

Bible, the Nicene Creed, the two Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, and episcopacy.

Here was a Bishop who could easily fit into the *Lux Mundi* style of Anglicanism—catholic, rational and evangelical in the correct sense of that word. *Lux Mundi* had been published in 1889 under the editorship of Charles Gore, ‘to put the Catholic faith into its right relation to modern intellectual and moral problems.’ Montgomery added one other element to the powerful theology of *Lux Mundi*—a [2/3] loving commitment to mission. Mission was his personal driving force.

Reflecting on the role of a bishop in his *Thoughts on the Work of a Bishop* (1905), he wrote⁵:

The character of Christianity is at stake in the colonies. There is little hope in Rome. There is less and less hope in the sects.

This belief inspired Montgomery to dynamic action in Tasmania. His personal creed was⁶:

a man must be a *leader* in the colonies. The quiet, harmless man will fail. It is all push ... all *pioneer work*, even in the cities.

He arrived in Hobart with his five young children in October 1889, and immediately set to work rebuilding and revitalising the Church which had languished during the short episcopate of his predecessor, Sandford. In May 1891 such was the flurry of activity, the *Church News* wrote that the church had ‘never since its foundations . . . made anything like such strides in advance within so short a time.’

It is important to remember that the 90s were years of severe and unremitting depression in Australia, and that of all States, Tasmania was hardest hit. Nevertheless, by May 1893 there had been a steady advance. Montgomery had appointed 11 new clergy, consecrated 31 more churches and licensed 47 other buildings for worship. Communicants had increased by 1,583, Sunday services by 3,045, and weekday services by 270.

In all spheres, Montgomery nearly doubled the figures over his whole episcopate. Despite the financial difficulties the number of churches increased from 72 to 125. And yet there was a canker growing in Tasmania that Montgomery was unable to excise. The Rev. J.B.W. Woolnough, warned the bishop of ‘the langour which here soon attacks, as a dry rot, most works of all kinds after they have settled down.’ Here, perhaps, the element in history which is ‘wise for the future’ rather than merely ‘clever in the present’ has application.

There is no doubt that Montgomery was a great bishop, and yet in so much he was frustrated. Ignorance, party spirit, self importance, sloth, stupidity, wilfulness, and sheer perversity rendered much of Montgomery’s work void. Tasmanians found it hard—perhaps have always found it hard—to accept that they have a bishop.

⁵ Montgomery H.H., *Thoughts on the Work of a Bishop*, (London 1905), p. 7.

⁶ Montgomery H.H., *Hints for a Commissary*, (London, N.D.), p. I.

Some years ago Hal Porter wrote⁷:

Beyond the London-in-1840 atmosphere of Hobart and the ordinary people living ordinary lives, there hovers in another dimension a kind of miasma from the putrescent remains of old bad dreams, old lonelineses [3/4] and lunacies, old and calculated sins against the Holy Ghost. Sinners no longer sin by the card because whiffs from this miasma, drifting across like some outrageous sal volatile, seem to stimulate infamous emotions so that tip-cat people act and interact as though the walls between right and wrong are air.

Montgomery was to wrestle with this evil miasma. The Mutton Bird Bishop, as he was called, was indeed a 'stormy petrel.' Nearly every good work he put his hand to, seemed to have failed.

Take as an example of this the Cathedral. Montgomery believed strongly that the Cathedral must be a symbol of diocesan strength and unity just as Stanley had seen Westminster Abbey as a national shrine. It was, however chronically understaffed, the Dean and the Bishop personally paying two assistants. An appeal to the diocese in October 1893 to improve the Cathedral's finances met strong resistance from the country parishes and was a cause for further division.

Perhaps the best symbol of Montgomery's frustrated ambition for the Church is the Cathedral Completion Scheme. On his tenth day in Tasmania, he was told of an anonymous gift of £1,000 to the Cathedral Building Fund, conditional on a tower with bells being built as well as the projected completion of the Cathedral with the addition of a Chancel.⁸ The Chancel indeed was completed and consecrated on 18 January, 1894, but although the foundation stone of the tower had been laid on 12 January, 1892 by the Primate, financial difficulties overtook the project, and the Cathedral was faced with a debt of £2,400.⁹ The symbolism can be carried even further. Even the Chancel which Montgomery had built was transitory. The weight of the roof was too great for the walls, and most of the earlier work had to be pulled down and rebuilt. It was completed in April 1909 at a cost of a further £4,000.

During Montgomery's episcopate, despite the troll that seemed to bedevil many of his most enthusiastic undertakings, the Church grew from nearly 81,000 in 1889, to nearly 88,000 in 1902, with a peak of 93,000 in 1900. But it was not merely this quantitative growth that is significant. He tried to change the attitude of Anglicans. His episcopate, one contemporary wrote¹⁰, was 'characterised by contagious enthusiasm.'

His immediate concern, of course, was the diocese. Montgomery said in 1894 that a bishop 'must be a missionary in his unwearying attention to the smallest and newest bush settlement.' He was tireless in visiting the whole diocese, including the remote mining districts and the islands of Bass Strait. Not only the country parishes benefited from his concern. He was committed to mission work among the poor in Launceston and Hobart, but he lacked lay support and properly trained clergy.

⁷ Porter H., *The Paper Chase*, (Melbourne 1966), p. 202.

⁸ Minute Book, Christ College, 'Completion of St David's,' pp. 2-15.

⁹ *Church News* (Tasmania 1893), p. 962.

¹⁰ David A.E., *Australia*, (London 1908), p. 148.

Before he arrived, Dean Dundas had written to the S.P.G.¹¹:

We greatly need to be freed from some half dozen of the incumbents, and have them replaced by men of education and energy. As it is we are getting very weak in men, and have hardly a single addition of late years who is worth anything—while we have lost more than one . . . The general status of the clergy has been lowered by the ordination of some who would (in my opinion) have been better as lay readers.

In later years Montgomery wrote to other bishops¹²: ‘All the clergy are your children.’ He lived by this principle, and although forced to sack two on arrival, he supported all his clergy. ‘We are a Church of gentlemen,’ he told his clergy, and looked for this in them, as well as for enthusiasm, prayer, industry and tolerance.

To improve his clergy he supplemented low stipends, held quiet days, wrote articles on the ministry for *Church News*, introduced a retirement fund, and selected sound theological books for the Diocesan Book Shop.

He re-arranged the structure of the diocese, emphasising the role of the ten new rural deans, and instituting a ‘One Archdeacon Plan.’ Montgomery’s idea was that the clergy would find more support and caring within the rural deaneries, and that an unattached roving archdeacon (without a parish) would relieve him of much of the tiresome detail and act as his executive. The plan was slow in realisation. The North was opposed to it; it became entangled in churchmanship issues; the rural deans did not function effectively or enthusiastically. (That Tasmanian troll at work again.)

At first Montgomery had pictured the Cathedral as a place for both lay and clerical training for the ministry, but there seemed to be little enthusiasm for this idea. In his first Synod address he had stated that clergy should not be imported from England, but trained within their own diocese from among their own men. He expected a high calibre of man, with a Melbourne University degree or its equivalent. Until 1893 when Christ College ceased to function, lectures in theology were given to those preparing for ordination. Thereafter Montgomery constituted a Board of Theological Studies to give lectures. He even suggested the appointment of a Professor of Divinity to co-ordinate this work—but that was going too far!

Not only was clerical education important to Montgomery but also the whole school system. He accepted the free and compulsory aspects [5/6] of State education, but proposed a teaching sisterhood to provide religious education in state schools. Braddon, the Premier supported this scheme, but after an initial meeting in Launceston in July 1895, nothing more eventuated.

Montgomery’s efforts with the Sunday School movement were more successful. In 1889 he wrote¹³: ‘Sunday Schools doing very badly here—no men.’ He was determined to revitalise them and organised a diocesan programme of lessons and examination. He conducted the first such examination himself, and then left the task to the parish clergy. It languished.

Launceston Grammar and Hutchins were both hit by the depression but managed

¹¹ S.P. G., Miscellaneous Letters, (February 1889), C.L. Dundas/W.F. Kemp.

¹² Montgomery H.H., *Thoughts*, op. cit., p. 14.

¹³ Christ College, Bishop Montgomery’s Letter Book, (December 1889).

to survive with comparatively small school populations, while Collegiate began in 1892 with a flurry of ritualistic debate over nuns, confession, anti-Romanism and anti-feminism. What could (and can) a bishop do in times of economic and social adversity?

Montgomery believed that in political issues the Church could only ‘sweeten controversy, sanctify thought, and press to the utmost of our power the ethical aspect of everything.’¹⁴ Therefore he opposed the Rev. Archibald Turnbull, a radical Christian Socialist. In this aspect of his ministry Montgomery was a dove where Turnbull was a hawk!

Turnbull had been a Melbourne priest who had gone to the extreme of social evangelicalism and joined the newly-formed Salvation Army. In 1890 he accepted the offer of assistant curate at New Town. This had been arranged before Montgomery arrived, but that might have been acceptable, except for the fact that Turnbull had been divorced and had re-married.

He further alienated his own Bishop by publicly espousing socialism, evangelicalism and undenominationalism.¹⁵ At New Town he soon alienated the congregations with outspoken and outrageous socialist sermons, alleging that the masses did not go to Church, because the Church did not go to them.¹⁶ Turnbull became increasingly involved in radical politics and thus farther from his Bishop. In fact, Turnbull was a successful social activist and found work for many men, and enquired into working conditions. He successfully lobbied parliament and there was even talk of revolution.

Turnbull fell foul of Montgomery as an agitator. Montgomery wanted reform by exerting moral pressure on the government, and believed that the Church must stay out of politics. Turnbull, on the other hand, demanded immediate and direct action. Further, Turnbull criticised the Bishop’s autocratic power, and refused to obey the [6/7] Archdeacon. Turnbull held a licence from the Bishop, and yet he publicly accused the Bishop of ‘trickery,’ ‘tyranny’ and ‘lying.’ He even declared that he ‘would not believe the Bishop on oath.’ Naturally Montgomery withdrew Turnbull’s licence as a priest. Montgomery was interested in political and social reform, but not by rallies, demonstrations and talk of revolution.

He formed an Australian Home Reading Union in 1892 to counter the influence of indecent books—it collapsed. He warned the 1891 Synod of the self-righteousness of total abstainers, but supported the work of temperance movements. In 1896 he circularised the clergy with suggestions for controlling sexual immorality, particularly prostitution. Montgomery stood firmly by the marriage bond. He wrote in 1901¹⁷:

One of the most serious dangers of our day is the belittling of the marriage tie ... It seems perfectly clear to me that it is the duty of the ancient English Church to teach in every possible way that it can that marriage is solemnised by God: that it can only be broken according to its command. The day will come, a century hence, when people will thank the English Church for stemming the down grade.

¹⁴ Report of the Church Congress, (1894), p. 16.

¹⁵ *Church News* (Tasmania, August 1891), p. 509.

¹⁶ *Tasmanian Democrat*, (March 1895), p. 1.

¹⁷ Christ College, Bishop Montgomery’s Letter Book, (April 1901), pp. 443-47.

He implemented this belief by insisting that marriages be performed in Church and by refusing communion to divorced or re-married persons.

Although this was a hard line on divorce, Montgomery was deeply concerned with social amelioration. In 1893 he wrote that the test of the reality of Church work lay¹⁸:

In the attention paid to the lowest stratum of society, many of whom found themselves on the bottom rung of the social ladder simply as the victims of circumstances and through very little fault of their own.

Montgomery gave £30 to bring out a lady with 17 years of experience working for the reclamation of prostitutes to establish a House of Mercy in Hobart.¹⁹ He became warden and his wife was on the executive. This was one of Montgomery's most successful undertakings as Bishop of Tasmania. The house and later hospital were enlarged and received financial support from the Government. Likewise he established homes for unmarried mothers, mission houses for the poor and cheap housing for the elderly.

He advocated votes for women in 1894 and prison reform which would include classification of prisoners, education and a full-time prison chaplain. He was totally opposed to gambling, particularly to George Adams, and accused the Government of replacing morals as [7/8] the motive of action with gain.²⁰ In his final Synod address, Montgomery mentioned Tattersalls as the greatest blot on his work as Bishop of Tasmania.

In these many ecclesiastical, social, moral and political areas Montgomery was clearly a concerned and committed Christian leader. His frustration and want of success was due to his being greater than his diocese. He thought too big, too wide, too bold for this small colonial Church. He saw Australia, they saw Tasmania. He saw the Anglican Church, they saw Tasmania. He saw the Pacific, they saw Tasmania.

Nowhere is this more clear than in his relationship to General Synod, the Primacy, and the Australian Church. The whole Bench of Bishops recognised in him a man with something of the apostolic spirit²¹, wrote the *Tasmanian Mail*, but his vision of a 'great united plan of action for the Church in Australia ... (for)... the whole church work between Africa and America'²² was far beyond the vision of his fellow bishops.

Part of the national problem for Montgomery, was William Saumarez Smith, bishop of Sydney and Primate of Australia. This 'bale of wool,' as the Bishop of Brisbane described him²³, was both weak and dictatorial. Part of the problem was that the Bishop of Sydney became the Primate automatically, and that he would always be an evangelical. Montgomery led the other bishops in resistance to this monopoly. In his first Synod address, he urged that the Primate must be elected from among all the Australian Bishops by a proper electoral body; that he would not necessarily be the Bishop of

¹⁸ *Church News* (Tasmania, November 1893), p. 962.

¹⁹ *Church News* (Tasmania, November 1889), p. 161.

²⁰ *Church News* (Tasmania, February 1896), p. 421-2.

²¹ *Tasmanian Mail*, (November 1901), p. 6.

²² *Report of the Church Congress*, (1894), p. 13.

²³ Christ College, Bishop's Correspondence, 54, (November 1900), Bishop of Brisbane/ Montgomery.

Sydney; and that Sydney must be free to elect as their bishop whoever they found most appropriate without the concern of the primacy. Montgomery was finally successful in pressing General Synod to accept anyone of the Bishops of the capital cities as Primate of Australia,²⁴

Within this national context, Montgomery saw each diocese as a fighting unit²⁵:

One of the most pressing duties laid upon your leaders in the Church is to combine dioceses into powerful unities for rapid and effective action.

His own military background in India is clear. What he had in mind was not aggressive, but pacific.

When the ‘wool bale’ Bishop of Sydney was doing nothing as Primate, Montgomery called the first Tasmanian Church Congress in 1894. Seventeen out of the 21 Australian dioceses were represented. Most of the discussion was on the national organisation of the Church [8/9] of England in Australia, although there was also a scholarly discussion on biblical criticism, devotional meetings, a crowded men’s gathering, a missionary rally, and a controversial debate on social issues. The bishops took the opportunity of holding six business meetings at Bishops court.

The Tasmanian Church Congress was an event which showed the measure of the man. He had a national concept of the Church. This national concept also affected his view of theological education. In the 1891 General Synod, Montgomery urged the creation of an Australian College of Theology, but Perth (W.A.) and Bathurst (N.S.W.) rejected the scheme.²⁶

Montgomery had a wider vision for his small diocese. In 1892 he spoke in Synod of the desirability of forming a province with an archbishop, made up of Tasmania, Melbourne, Ballarat (Vic.) and Adelaide (S. A.). Although Ballarat ‘heartily concurred,’ Adelaide was only lukewarm, and Melbourne was distinctly against the idea. The Primate too thought that forming provinces was ‘to be deprecated.’ Montgomery was not discouraged and in his last three Synod charges urged Tasmania to join a province. Apart from the wider concept of the Church that this would bring, he argued that pension funds, church schools and theological colleges would all benefit from provincial organisation.²⁷

His vision was wider even than a province. In March 1895 the Bishop of Salisbury wrote to him²⁸ suggesting the establishment of a permanent council of bishops to deliberate on doctrine and discipline, union or intercommunion with other churches, and internal organisational arrangements within the Anglican communion. Montgomery commended this idea with his ‘own hearty assent’ to the Synod that year. Montgomery’s Pan Anglicanism can be seen as early as 1891 when he urged Church House in Westminster to create a telegraphic code for the use of the entire Anglican Church.²⁹ The code was supplied in 1896.

²⁴ Tasmanian Year Book, (1901), p. 24.

²⁵ Tasmanian Year Book, (1896), p. 10.

²⁶ Tasmanian Year Book, (1895), p. 9.

²⁷ *Church News* (Tasmania, May 1893), p. 851.

²⁸ Christ College, Bishop’s Correspondence 48, (March 1895), John Sarum/ Montgomery.

²⁹ *Report from General Synod*, (1891), pp. 64-5.

In 1897 Montgomery foreshadowed what he hoped for himself. He believed that Canterbury's leadership within the Anglican communion should be strengthened and an episcopal secretary for missions should be appointed. On his way to the Lambeth conference that year, Montgomery wrote to his Archdeacon, Whittington³⁰:

The following will gratify you but it is *not* for publication. I have just heard here from the Bishop of Winchester that I am to haste home—that I am needed to consult about the Lambeth conference and the Archbishop sends to say that I am to lead off (or nearly so) on the organisation of the Church throughout the world.

[10] On 5 July, he addressed the Lambeth conference on 'A central consultative body for the Anglican Communion.' His motion was accepted and a consultative council was established.

Montgomery's wide organisational interests expressed themselves in the 1900 General Synod when he moved that a committee be formed to report on³¹:

Whether it is possible to set on foot a scheme for united action upon a large scale, extending over a term of years, having objects such as—clergy pensions, religious education, clergy training and church expansion, or other subjects of great importance

And also whether it is advisable to obtain the co-operation of Churches such as those of New Zealand, Canada and South Africa to work on parallel lines, but in touch with each other. And also whether the time has not come to obtain from England the personal assistance of leading churchmen to assist the scheme—the Bishop of Tasmania to be convener of such Committee.

General Synod passed this motion, and set up a thanksgiving fund with Montgomery on the organising committee. No object was specified for the fund, but Montgomery valued it not so much as a means of raising money, but as a national Anglican venture. 'It is an idea—' he said³², 'and the value of a great idea cannot be estimated in money.' In five years, however, the Australian Church collected one hundred and fifty thousand and thirteen pounds, thirteen and threepence.

With the coming of Federation, some Anglicans felt the need for a change of name which would identify the Church of England as authentically Australian. Montgomery allowed the Tasmanian Synod of 1901 to discuss the matter, although he cautioned that it was merely academic at the moment and believed that it would be ten or 15 years before any change would come about! Perhaps something of Montgomery's difficulty as a Bishop in a remote colony is seen in that Dean Kite proposed the name, The Anglo-Catholic Church, and Canon Shoobridge countered with the name, The Tasmanian Church!

The Bishop of Brisbane at the outset of the newly federated Australia was pessimistic about Church life. 'Here we are—,' he wrote,³³ 'languid and languishing, because we have no real faith in the effectiveness of our own Church order.'

³⁰ Christ College; Bishop's Correspondence 45, (February 1897), Montgomery/F.T. Whittington.

³¹ *Report from General Synod*, (1900), p. 26.

³² *Tasmanian Year Book*, (1901), p. 24.

³³ *Christian Record*, (February 1901), p. 133.

Montgomery did not share this pessimism. He had an infectious enthusiasm and expected growth and development not only within Australia, but throughout the whole Pacific. In his enthronement sermon in October 1889, he had said; ‘For [10/11] years there has burned in me a growing desire to aid the mission cause with all my heart.’

Montgomery’s immediate concern was the half-castes on the islands of Bass Strait. In after years Montgomery wrote³⁴:

Think of the lighthouse people, and any who are out of the way at all. Visit them. I always said that those outside the clergyman’s touch . . . were my special care. No trouble is too great for such folk.

His effort towards the half castes was one of his greatest failures. He visited the islands at least once a year, even pitching a tent with the lighthearted title ‘Bishopscourt’ outside the door flap. Edward Stephens, the long-suffering teacher at Cape Barren Island from 1890 to 1897, described the half castes as the poorest and meanest of all men. There are some specimens of humanity here,’ he wrote, ‘which would make a fortune if exhibited in the cities of the world.’

In 1892, however, Montgomery felt that the missionary work among these island people was going so well that he could write³⁵:

I find the half castes much advanced in general steadiness and self-respect. Drunkenness is becoming very uncommon . . . The population loves the school, and is perfectly regular at all religious services. It is not an inapt illustration to liken the community there to the Pitcairn Islanders. Their life is as united and is so much helped in the ways of a simple godliness.

Not only was Montgomery concerned with the half-caste Bass Strait Islanders, but also with the fauna and flora of the region. He prevailed on Parliament to pass restrictive laws on mutton-birding and for the preservation of the Cape Barren Goose. He addressed the Royal Society several times on mutton birds and their habits and tried to prevent their imminent extinction. For this the *Mercury* gave him the nickname—the ‘Mutton Bird Bishop.’

Despite his love for these islands and their people, all was not well. The islanders resented Stephens, their school master and lay reader, and indeed he seems to have fired his shot gun at them several times to enforce his discipline. After due enquiry, Montgomery supported Stephens, but they turned against the Church alleging that on one occasion Montgomery found Stephens sitting³⁶:

on the roof of the water closet . . . (with) only my nightshirt on, and . . . singing the National Anthem! He asked me what I was doing and I told him I was showing my loyalty to the Queen”. He said—’Oh come down and come inside and we will make a night of it.’ And we did so. They said they knew I was a drunkard, but the Bishop was a ‘bloody’ sight worse!

³⁴ Montgomery, *Thoughts*, op. cit., p. 17.

³⁵ Christ College, Bishop’s Correspondence 47, (February 1892), Montgomery/T. Stephens.

³⁶ Stephens, E.W., *The Furneaux Islands. Their Early Settlement and some Characteristics of their Inhabitants*, (Launceston 1899), p. 9.

[12] Montgomery's last visit to the islands was in August 1901, when he wrote that they had been very dear to his heart³⁷:

I have spent happy days there and anxious ones. I have learnt grand lessons of patience and many a lesson of life, and leave with regret many dear friends.

His missionary zeal extended also to the Chinese community in Tasmania. There were 800 Chinese in Tasmania in 1894, of whom eight were Christians. The Synod of 1893 voted £50 towards a Chinese mission, and in 1894 Yung Choy, an evangelist, arrived to work in Garibaldi and Weld borough. He earned £104 a year, but it was difficult to know what progress was being made as Yung Choy spoke no English. Yung Choy brought nine Chinese to baptism by 1896, although *Chunk News* commented that³⁸

It is a source of perplexity to us to know how far there was real change of heart. It is so difficult to understand Yung Choy and his countrymen.

Montgomery had eventually to rescue the Chinese mission with £30 from his own purse. The mission was obviously a failure, although in January 1897 Montgomery publicly stated his willingness to appoint another catechist to start again³⁹.

This deep concern with missionary work can be seen in his interest in the whole Pacific Ocean. In October, 1890, Montgomery had declared his intention of visiting the Melanesian mission⁴⁰, and in 1892 when Bishop Selwyn fell ill, he was invited to pay an episcopal visitation for three months. In later years he described this experience as the greatest event in his life⁴¹, but in his book, *The Light of Melanesia*, 1896, he boldly criticised the outmoded methods of organisation, the inefficient deployment of staff and the fear of new approaches. He listed the problems that needed debate: the establishment of permanent European stations in the islands, the employment of women missionaries, the extension of education, the question of a *lingua franca*, and toleration of indigenous customs.

By now he was becoming the leading missionary bishop and was soon to become trusted adviser to the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson. He was seen as a far-sighted missionary strategist⁴². Montgomery had spoken strongly about the Church's missionary responsibility during the Tasmanian Church Congress, and in April he organised a national self-denial for missions. He hoped to collect £10,000, but managed only four thousand four hundred and eight pounds one shilling and threepence, further evidence of his vision and [12/13] enthusiasm and of the apathy of Anglicans, although it must be remembered again that it was a time of economic depression.

The question of missionary work in New Guinea also concerned Montgomery greatly. In July, 1895, he sent a memorandum to all Australian bishops calling for the immediate establishment of a New Guinea bishopric. Saumarez Smith, the Primate, resisted the idea as premature, and opposed Montgomery's plan to finance it by an

³⁷ *Church News*, (Tasmania, September 1901), p. 142.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, (May 1896), p. 460.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, (January 1897), p. 588.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, (October 1890), p. 341.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, (November 1901), p. 169.

⁴² Hilliard, D., *God's Gentlemen*, (U.Q.P. 1978), p. 112.

episcopal act of denial—himself having pledged £20 per annum. Montgomery now launched into the attack, and circularised the bishops again saying⁴³:

The Primate's whole attitude in my opinion is vitiated by his inability to see urgency in the situation ... He talks of an endowment (I suppose £ 10,000) before the Bishopric is created.

In May 1896 he circularised the bishops yet again, this time urging those who disagreed with the Primate to act anyway and when the work was done to present him with a *fait accompli*.

Montgomery felt strongly on this matter because the Administrator of New Guinea, Sir William MacGregor, had agreed to leave New Guinea as an Anglican preserve. To Montgomery this was a matter of pride and he did not wish the Church either to miss the opportunity or to be seen as careless and lack-lustre. Secondly, he wanted to wrest control of New Guinea from the Protestant Primate and place it firmly in the hands of North Queensland as a missionary diocese. Evidence of Saumarez Smith's Protestantism appeared when he argued whether a bishopric was the right kind of organisation for a mission. In General Synod of 1896 the Bishop of Melbourne moved, and Montgomery seconded the motion for the creation of a New Guinea bishopric. The motion was passed with acclamation. On 25 January, 1898, Montagu John Stone-Wigg was consecrated first Bishop of New Guinea—it had mainly been the work of the bishop of the island at the other extreme of a rather somnambulant mainland.

One of the highlights of his missionary work in Australia was the organisation of the A.B.M. Jubilee Celebrations of 1900. Church News reported that the Jubilee was 'the most marvellous witness to the inherent power of Church life in these colonies which has ever taken place'⁴⁴. Montgomery had toured the dioceses of Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Goulburn, Sydney and Bathurst to publicise the Jubilee, travelling 6,500 miles in six weeks and giving 50 addresses. As a result of the Jubilee the Australian Church gave an extra £9,000 to mission work. The Church did not, however, act on Montgomery's plan to [13/14] develop a missionary strategy for the whole Pacific that would last for the next 100 years. Montgomery was too big a man for Tasmania, even, it would seem, for Australia. His vision was of world-wide Anglicanism.

On 6 June, 1901, he received a telegram from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and others asking him to accept the post of episcopal secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. He was elected to that post on 26 July. Montgomery saw this as a call 'to create a sort of foreign secretaryship of Anglican missions . . . 'The outlook' (he said) 'is terrifying in its possibilities.' That this was the right job can be seen in a letter he wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury⁴⁵:

It is because the work is all Missionary here that I love it so. Great questions such as education, temperance, social problems between classes, come to me as dunes. Missionary questions come to me as joys.

Montgomery had begun his episcopate with the reputation of being an evangelical.

⁴³ Christ College, Bishop's Correspondence, (April 1896), 'Present Convictions.'

⁴⁴ *Church News* (Tasmania, September 1900), p. 136.

⁴⁵ Christ College, Bishop's Letter Book, Montgomery/Archbishop of Canterbury (June 1901), p. 463.

He soon dispelled the fears of the Catholics in Tasmania. He made it quite clear that although he hated party dispute, he himself was a churchman of sound English Catholic principles. The Protestant Church press was glad to see him go. The *Christian Record* wrote in August, 1901:

It may be that God is taking the first step towards sending us the blessing long prayed for by some by removing a great hindrance to a real revival of true religion.

Churchmanship disputes in the 19th century were a feature of Anglican life everywhere, but in Tasmania they seemed to take on a particularly virulent tone. After the great vision of Pan Anglicanism which Montgomery fostered, it seems petty and parochial to turn to talk of processional crosses, candles, confession, prayers for the dead and religious orders. Unfortunately they were a prominent feature of his episcopate. Captain de Hoghton, a Church Warden from Pontville, and the Rev. H.C. Wisdom, a Kensitite and curate of St George's Battery Point, were unrelenting in their attacks on anything they deemed to be Roman. Montgomery always sided with the Churchmen, and detested the division which the Kensitites were causing within his diocese.

The *Christian Record* was the principal mouthpiece of the Low Church movement. It became so exasperated with Montgomery, that at the beginning of 1901 it spoke of the necessity of schism to preserve true Protestant doctrine in Tasmania. As an alternative, however, it [14/15] advised its readers to attend nonconformist churches until 'superstition and priestcraft shall be swept away.'⁴⁶ Wisdom returned to England, and de Hoghton continued his lonely campaign claiming to represent the true Church of England—his was a wilderness voice crying in a fertile land.

If Montgomery's Pan Anglicanism is one of the greatest strengths of his episcopate, the party spirit which he had to put up with is the worst aspect. It was beyond his control, and yet he handled this familiar aspect with tact and determination, in his 1982 Eldershaw Memorial Lecture, Geoffrey Serle spoke on his biography of Sir John Monash⁴⁷:

The problem comes down to the difficulty of, and inhibitions about, making any total or final judgement. Lytton Strachey had marvellous qualities as a biographer, but one must avoid like the plague his arrogant condescension. It is arrogant to pity one's subject—though one must have compassion, that is an important distinction to make. The biographer should recognise the limitations to fully understanding and interpreting the complexities of another human being, and not presume to pass a conclusive judgement. That is St Peter's job. That is not to say that one cannot write conjecturably, with proper modesty.

It is not my place then to pass any concluding judgement on the episcopate of Henry Hutchinson Montgomery. The facts I hope speak for themselves.

⁴⁶ *Christian Record*, (January 1901), p. 109.

⁴⁷ T.H.R.A., (December 1982), 29, 4, p. 133.