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Jasper, D. and Smith, J. (2019) 'The Lay Folks' Mass Book' and Thomas Frederick Simmons: medievalism and the Tractarians. *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, (doi:[10.1017/S002204691900054X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S002204691900054X))

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Deposited on: 26 March 2019

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‘The Lay Folks’ Mass Book’ and Thomas Frederick Simmons: Medievalism and the Tractarians

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Thomas Frederick Simmons (1815–84) combined his ecclesiastical duties and liturgical interests with editing the fourteenth-century Middle English Lay folks’ mass book (1879) for the Early English Text Society, with the aim of showing the continuity of the English Church from the medieval period through the Reformation. In the light of modern scholarship, this article recontextualises both medieval text and Simmons’s own editorial practice, and shows how Simmons, as a second generation Tractarian churchman, sought in this text – and others associated with it – evidence for the Church of England’s Catholic underpinning in an imagined medieval English Church.

Thomas Frederick Simmons and his world

Modern scholarship has not been kind to the medievalist scholarship of the Revd Thomas Frederick Simmons, canon of York Minster and rector of Dalton Holme. Susan Powell, for instance, has consigned his edition of the Middle English text that he entitled *The lay folks’ mass book: or, The manner of hearing mass (LFMB)*¹ to a form of ‘fey antiquarianism’.² Yet Simmons is

BL = British Library, London; EETS = Early English Text Society; *ESTC* = *English Short Title Catalogue*; *LALME* = *Linguistic atlas of late medieval English*; *LFMB* = *The lay folks’ mass book*; *ODNB* = *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

We are indebted to William Whyte for extremely helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper, and to Bridget Nichols and Wendy Scase for encouragement.

¹ *The lay folks’ mass book: or, The manner of hearing mass*, ed. Thomas F. Simmons, (EETS lxxi, 1879).

² Susan Powell, ‘The transmission and circulation of *The lay folks’ catechism*’, in A. J. Minnis (ed.), *Late medieval religious texts and their transmission: essays in honour of A. I. Doyle*, Cambridge 1994, 67–84 at p. 69.

perhaps more interesting than this verdict suggests, and in his own time he was clearly regarded as a serious scholar. By 1879, when his *Early English Text Society* edition of the *LFMB* appeared, Simmons had already published articles on liturgy and on canon law in Alexander Strahan's high-profile journal the *Contemporary Review*. He was an expert liturgist, and at his death in 1884 he bequeathed some 600 books on the subject to York Minster Library. The library holds a number of Simmons's liturgical texts, some from his student days in Oxford and heavily annotated, and his early notebooks: all valuable evidence for his interests.³ Canon Raine, the Minster's librarian, wrote in his preface to the first printed catalogue that

In 1884, Thomas Frederick Simmons, Prebendary of York, bequeathed to the Dean and Chapter the sum of £100 for the purpose of their library, together with all his liturgical works, of which they did not already possess copies, and such other works as the present librarian may wish to select. Mr. Simmons began to collect books for this purpose when the library was revived in 1870.⁴

By that time Simmons was at work for the EETS on another volume – eventually completed, in 1901, by Canon Henry Edward Nolloth – *The lay folks' catechism: or, The English and Latin versions of Archbishop Thoresby's instruction for the people; together with a Wycliffite adaptation of the same, and the corresponding canons of the Council of Lambeth*.⁵ The two works stand beside Henry Littlehales's edition of *The prymer* (c. 1400) which he calls the 'Prayer-Book of the Lay People'.⁶ However mistakenly in the light of later scholarship – the *Catechism* for instance seems to have been designed for priestly use – the three works were clearly regarded by these Victorian editors as linked.

There are relatively few records of the life of Thomas Frederick Simmons. He was born in Woolwich, Kent, into a military family, one of twelve children of Captain Thomas Simmons. He matriculated as 'post-master' at Merton College, Oxford, in 1832 or 1833.⁷ He left Merton in 1834, presumably without a degree and quite possibly to pursue a career in the army.⁸ However he later returned to Oxford and graduated from Worcester College with a BA in 1848 (MA, 1859). At Worcester he

³ For these details we are indebted to Steven Newman of York Minster Library.

⁴ James Raine, *Catalogue of the printed books in the library of the dean and chapter of York*, York 1896, pp. xxiii–xxiv.

⁵ *The lay folks' catechism*, ed. Thomas F. Simmons and Henry E. Nolloth (EETS cxviii, 1901).

⁶ *The prymer: or, Lay-folks' prayer-book*, ed. Henry Littlehales (EETS cv, cix, 1895–7). This edition was based on CUL, ms Dd.xi.82. Littlehales had already edited the *Prymer* for an earlier, non-EETS edition, drawing on St John's College, Cambridge, ms G.24: *The prymer: or, Prayer-book of the lay people in the Middle Ages*, London 1891–2.

⁷ Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, Oxford 1891, and *Crockford's Clerical Directory*.

⁸ Six of the eight brothers were army officers, including Major-General Sir John Lintorn Arabin Simmons (1821–1903), governor of Woolwich, who, unlike Thomas, has attracted an *ODNB* entry. It should however be noted that Thomas Simmons's

would have encountered William Palmer whose *Origines liturgicae* (1832; fourth edn, 1845) on 'the antiquities of the English ritual' emphasised the continuity of the liturgical life of the 'English Church' from the late medieval period through the Reformation.⁹ In 1848 Simmons was ordained deacon in the Church of England, serving as curate of Buford until 1852. In 1853 he seems to have moved to the parish of Dalton Holme, becoming its rector in 1861, and there he remained until his death on 26 September 1884. In 1869 he became a Prebendary of York Minster.

Little is recorded of Simmons's ministry apart from some notebooks, an annotated Bible in English and Greek, his heavily annotated Book of Common Prayer and a few published articles – all now in the York Minster Library. Nevertheless, there is some published evidence for his liturgical scholarship in the years before and after the publication of *LFMB*. In 1875 William George Henderson, a schoolmaster at Leeds Grammar School and later dean of Carlisle, edited the *York missal* for the Surtees Society, thanking Simmons in his introduction 'for much valuable assistance',¹⁰ and in the second edition of his authoritative *The Sarum missal in English* (1884), A. H. Pearson both refers to and debates with Simmons.¹¹ But Simmons's major contribution to published scholarship remains the *LFMB* and his unfinished work on the *Lay folks' catechism*.

Simmons's work on the *LFMB* can of course be seen within the wider frame of nineteenth-century philology. David Matthews has contributed hugely to our understanding of the 'making of Middle English' after the eighteenth century, and his study of the early subscription lists for the EETS shows that many of the first readers were, like Simmons, provincial clergymen.¹² Only later was the EETS to become a professionalised outlet for critical editions bearing the imprimatur of a wholly academic editorial council. Clergymen – perhaps most famously Richard Chevenix Trench, archbishop of Dublin, who when dean of Westminster has a claim to be the founder of what was to become the *Oxford English Dictionary* – were at the forefront of the British branch of the 'new philology'.

However, there are clearly other currents involved in Simmons's engagement with these texts. His religious position in relation to the Oxford Movement, early in his career at least, seems to be indicated *inter alia* by the English Bible with Greek New Testament that he donated to York Minster: a heavily-annotated student copy, signed by him ('Thos. Fred.

name does not appear in any of the contemporary lists of Sandhurst graduates, for which see <<http://www.archive.sandhurstcollection.co.uk/>>.

⁹ See James Kirby, *Historians and the Church of England: religion and historical scholarship, 1870–1920*, Oxford 2016, 86.

¹⁰ *Manuale et processionale ad usum Insignis Ecclesiae Eboracensis* (Surtees Society, 1875).

¹¹ A. H. Pearson, *The Sarum missal in English*, London 1884. The first edition was published in 1868.

¹² David Matthews, *The making of Middle English*, Minneapolis 1999.

Simmons') as a Fellow Commoner of Worcester College, Oxford, in 1842. This volume appears to have been a gift to Simmons, already described as an 'ordinand', by John Keble himself. Keble adds a lengthy handwritten inscription: 'Interpreting any document, try and ascertain exactly what was in the mind and intention of him who dictated it, and remember that He who has dictated the sacred scripture is God the Holy Ghost.' Simmons was thus clearly being recognised, while still an undergraduate, as someone of promise by the Oxford Movement's most inspirational figure.

Perhaps the most interesting item in Simmons's York Minster donations are his early manuscript notebooks, in two volumes, dating from 1847 to 1852 and demonstrating his serious liturgical interests. The first notebook consists of an alphabetical list of topics, indicating that he was reading the work of William Maskell, whose ground-breaking books *The ancient liturgy of the Church of England* (1844) and the three-volume *Monumenta ritualia Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (1846) had just appeared.¹³ This encounter seems to have triggered his interest in the *LFMB*, for in the edition's preface Simmons tells us that he had first encountered the work through extracts in Maskell's notes in *Ancient liturgy*, suggesting that the *LFMB* was the 'only document I had met with that enables us to know the prayers which the unlearned of our forefathers used at mass, and by the light it threw upon their inner religious life from a point of view different from that afforded by the many mediaeval sermons that have come down to us'.¹⁴ Maskell returned the compliment, writing in the second edition of *Ancient liturgy* that:

In the second edition of this book I referred to this manuscript as the 'Museum Manuscript'; but the poem has lately been printed for the early English text society; admirably edited by the Rev. T. F. Simmons, canon of York, with an excellent introduction and an appendix of valuable and learned notes. Canon Simmons calls it 'the Lay Folks Mass Book': and by that name I shall refer to the manuscript as we proceed.¹⁵

In fact, Maskell never refers to the *LFMB* again, though in the first volume of his *Monumenta ritualia Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, he does refer to 'portos' as books used by laymen to say their prayers, but sometimes also used in parish churches at the altar, and therefore, presumably, related in some way to the saying of the mass: he may have been thinking of the *LFMB* or similar works.

¹³ William Maskell, *The ancient liturgy of the Church of England*, London 1844, and *Monumenta ritualia Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, London 1846–7.

¹⁴ *LFMB*, pp. ix–x. A brief footnote in the 1882 Clarendon edition of Maskell's *Ancient liturgy* indicates that the author was aware of Simmons's B-text long before Simmons was, although he simply described it, in a footnote to the *Confiteor Deo* (Confession), as 'consisting of long rubrics and prayers relating to the liturgy, all in English verse' (p. 14).

¹⁵ Maskell, *Ancient liturgy*, 4.

177 The notebook also contains a long entry on the Use of Sarum, and a
 178 loose-leaf printed notice of 'Authors of "plain sermons", Vol. X', among
 179 whom are named John Keble, Isaac Williams and E. B. Pusey, with a hand-
 180 written annotation referring to the *Lyra apostolica* (1836), a collection of
 181 poems by Tractarians, primarily John Henry Newman, but also John
 182 Keble, Isaac Williams, Hurrell Froude, John William Bowden and the theo-
 183 logian Robert Isaac Wilberforce. This background in Tractarianism clearly
 184 informs Simmons's later surviving writings in the York Minster collection,
 185 including the lengthy liturgical article 'Standing before the Lord's
 186 Table', published in 1867 in the newly-founded *Contemporary Review*.
 187 However, that Simmons chose the *Review* for his article suggests a more
 188 nuanced position in the Church, one closer to the post-Oxford
 189 Tractarian parish clergy that has been recently described by George
 190 Herring; the journal's founder, in 1866, had been the Church of
 191 Scotland Presbyterian publisher Alexander Strahan, who encouraged con-
 192 tributions from a wide range of confessional orientations. Simmons's essay
 193 was a response to the argument of the ritualist R. F. Littledale, the incum-
 194 bent of St Mary the Virgin, Soho,¹⁶ who had proposed an eastward-facing
 195 position for the celebrant as opposed to the north-side position adopted
 196 by most clergy of the time. Simmons, with ponderous historical reference,
 197 argues for a conservative position against ritualists like Littledale, dismiss-
 198 ing 'such men as are given to change', while admitting that 'we have had
 199 to dwell upon small facts with a minuteness which must have been wearis-
 200 some to our readers'.¹⁷

201 Simmons's engagement with the *LFMB* can therefore be seen as more
 202 than philological: as part of a programme of informed liturgical scholar-
 203 ship with which he had been concerned since his Oxford student days.
 204 Richard Pfaff has noted that several factors combined to promote an inter-
 205 est in the Anglican liturgy's medieval revival: the Roman Catholic revival,
 206 the Oxford Movement, the founding of Anglican religious orders and, in
 207 the universities, the growth of medieval history in the curriculum.¹⁸

208 We have already noted Simmons's early awareness of Maskell, who, along
 209 with the layman Francis Henry Dickinson and others, formed a group
 210 which first published modern editions of pre-Reformation English litur-
 211 gies. For instance, Dickinson's *Missale ad usum insignis et praeclaræ ecclesiae*
 212 *Sarum* – the Sarum Rite in Latin medieval England's dominant liturgy –
 213 appeared in fascicles between 1861 and 1883.¹⁹ Simmons's engagement
 214
 215

216 ¹⁶ See George Herring, *The Oxford Movement in practice*, Oxford 2016, 207.

217 ¹⁷ Thomas Frederick Simmons, 'Standing before the Lord's table', *Contemporary*
 218 *Review* (Jan. 1867), 22.

219 ¹⁸ Richard Pfaff, *The liturgy in medieval England*, Cambridge 2009.

220 ¹⁹ *Missale ad usum insignis et praeclaræ ecclesiae Sarum*, ed. Francis H. Dickinson,
 Burntisland 1861–83.

with vernacular texts such as the *LFMB* can be seen in this context, as indeed can Littlehales's *The prymer: or, Lay folks prayer book* (1895–7), which from the title it was assigned was clearly seen as in some sense a prefiguration of the first, 'moderate' Edwardian prayer book of 1549, a text of crucial importance for the Oxford Movement, whose origins necessarily attracted much interest.²⁰

However, although Geoffrey Cuming has pointed out that 'Oxford became the source of a flood of liturgical reprints',²¹ the recovery and publication of pre-1549 liturgical texts in England was in its infancy. Simmons's knowledge of such matters was, of necessity therefore, largely self-acquired even though the *LFMB*'s preface shows his engagement with those prominent contemporary medievalists, such as W. W. Skeat, who were developing the new discipline of 'academic English'.

The Lay folks' mass book in its contemporary context

In order to identify what Simmons found in the *LFMB*, and why he found it an attractive text for his purposes, it is necessary to give a clearer account of its contents. The *LFMB* survives in nine manuscript miscellanies of which Simmons knew six, assigning them the sigla A through F:

A: National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, MS Advocates' 19.3.1, fos 57r–58v

B: BL, MS Royal 17.B.xvii, fos 3r–13r

C: Corpus Christi College, Oxford, MS 155, fos 252v–268r

D: Cambridge University, MS Gg 5.31, fos 55v–60r

E: Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, MS 84/166 (part II), pp. 173–9

F: Newnham College, Cambridge, MS 900.4 (*olim* Yates Thompson), fos 104v–109v

Three more texts of the *LFMB* have since come to light. These versions are noted in the *Index of Middle English verse*,²² item 3507, to which might be assigned the sigla G through I:

G: Cambridge University Library, MS li.4.9, fos 55v–60r (begins imperfectly)

H: University Library, Liverpool, MS F.4.9, fos 203v–207v

I: BL, MS Add. 36523, fos 88r–93r

²⁰ See John Dowden, *Further studies in the prayer book*, London 1908, 17, 23, 27.

²¹ Geoffrey J. Cuming, *A history of Anglican liturgy*, 2nd edn, London 1982, 148.

²² Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, *A new index of Middle English verse*, London 2005.

The *LFMB* seems to have originated in the later years of the fourteenth century, which places it in the context of such Middle English devotional writing as the work of Walter Hilton, John Mirk, Richard Rolle and William of Nassyngton, as well as John Wycliffe (and possibly John Trevisa). BL, MS Royal 17.B.xvii provides, according to the various catalogue descriptions, the oldest (fourteenth-century) as well as fullest version (Text B) of the *LFMB*. The remaining manuscripts all date from the fifteenth century. In all them the *LFMB* appears alongside various other works both religious and vernacular. Thus, for instance, text I is a collection of vernacular works; the *LFMB* is preceded there by the widely-circulated rhyming romance of *Titus and Vespasian* (recorded in twelve other manuscripts²³), and Richard Maidstone's English translation of the *Penitential Psalms*.²⁴

The religious material presented alongside the *LFMB* in the various miscellanies in which it appears is in general theologically orthodox. For example, Maidstone was a Carmelite friar who died around 1396, well-known for his public attacks on the lollards, practitioners of the greatest and most persistent English 'heresy'. The only manuscript that includes anything that might potentially trouble the authorities is that containing the B-text, where appear in addition two works that seem to derive from lollard sources: an English translation of Wycliffe's Latin *Epistola ad simplices sacerdotes*, and a Latin extract on preaching, 'also doubtless of Lollard origin' as the BL catalogue puts it. But neither work is especially controversial in content, and Wycliffe's name is not mentioned in either. It is entirely possible that the scribe did not know where the text came from. Similarly, the *LFMB* seems at first sight to be theologically orthodox. The special place given to the role of the priest in it seems not to align with lollard views on the priesthood of all believers (even including women),²⁵ i.e. anti-sacerdotalism; the celebrant in the *LFMB* is described as undertaking a mystery with the congregation praying as witnesses.

The *LFMB* survives in a variety of written formats, and seems to have been a living text, open to significant revision depending on the functions required of it: something that is somewhat obscured by Simmons's editing practice, which reordered material to align passages with each other and which tended to detach the various texts from their distinct manuscript contexts. For example, Text G omits the material describing the activity of the priest and focuses on the prayers to be said by the congregation, thus becoming a script rather than a libretto. It seems unlikely that – with the possible exception of the manuscript of Text A, which is a so-called 'holster-book' – any of the manuscripts containing the *LFMB*

²³ Ibid. item 1881.

²⁴ Ibid. item 1961.

²⁵ Margaret Aston, *Lollards and reformers*, London 1984, 49–70. See also Fiona Somerset, *Feeling like saints: lollard writings after Wyclif*, Ithaca 2014.

were actually carried into church for they are for the most part bulky books, all containing other, often quite long vernacular works, such as the *Northern passion*, Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng synne* and the *Northern homily cycle*.²⁶

The *Linguistic atlas of late Medieval English* has localised the language of seven of these versions: Text B in Derbyshire (*LALME* Linguistic Profile = LP3); C in the North Riding of Yorkshire (*LALME*=LP7); G in Norfolk (*LALME*=LP621); H in the West Riding (*LALME*=LP460; and – as flagged – J to Northamptonshire (*LALME*=LP4276). Text D, although not assigned an LP number by *LALME*, is recorded there as written in a form of northern Middle English, while *LALME* records the three hands in the manuscript containing Text E as in a language that 'belongs to Derbys'. Clearly therefore, at least on the linguistic evidence, the *LFMB* circulated widely, especially in northern England.

Simmons provided edited versions of Texts B, C, E and F, accompanied by variant readings from A and D. Subsequently, Gordon Gerould provided an edition of D with corrections to Simmons's variants, being politely but professionally dismissive: 'It is only fair to say that Canon Simmons, from the antiquarian and ecclesiastical point of view so admirable an editor, may not himself have seen the MS. from which he quotes.'²⁷

The contents of the *LFMB* may be swiftly outlined. The B-text offers the most complete version, of some 630 lines in rhyming couplets, and for that reason Simmons placed it in prime position in his edition, with the other versions reordered to place comparable material alongside it. The poem alternates between a description of the actions of the priest and recommendations as to the actions (standing, crossing oneself) and prayers to be offered by the congregation; in B, the description and glosses are underlined in red and referred to as 'robryk' (rubric), while the prayers are presented 'in blak', without underlining. Simmons's edition tried to reproduce these features of the text through the use of bold typefaces.

The poem begins with a discussion of the alleged origins of the work, ascribed in B to 'dam Ieremy' (transmuted in C, completely fallaciously, to the better-known 'Saynte Ierome'). The poet asserts that the mass is 'þo worthyest þing', and that it should not be accompanied by any 'iangling' (chatter). The focus then shifts to the priest, how he vests at the altar and then begins the mass. Each stage is described: the confession of priest and clergy followed by the 'lered and lewed' (literate and ignorant) in the congregation, the readings from Scripture, the Creed, the

²⁶ The manuscript containing text A – known after its scribe as the 'Heege manuscript' – is a very miscellaneous collection, including markedly secular material. See, for instance, D. Scott-Macnab, 'The hunttyng of the hare in the Heege manuscript', *Anglia* cxx (2010), 102–23, and references there cited.

²⁷ Gordon H. Gerould, 'The lay-folks' mass-book from MS Gg V.31, Cambridge University Library', *Englische Studien* xxxiii (1904), 1–26 at p. 2.

priest's preparations and the elevation of the host (accompanied by 'A litel belle to mark ihesu crist awen presence', something insisted upon in the text), prayers for the dead, the peace and the blessing. Throughout appear instructions to the congregation for particular actions, for example standing and crossing oneself for the Gospel, and suggested prayers to be said at key points: the *Paternoster*, *Ave* and *Credo* are especially noted (with translations into English sometimes provided for memorisation). There are also rhyming prayers, some of which are to be spoken internally, i.e. 'sayande þus in þi mynde'.

Throughout the saying of the Collect and the Epistle, the laity are to kneel and repeat the *Paternoster*, standing only when priest or deacon reads the Gospel. It is not the words but the actions of the priest that are described and are to be followed in the 'hearing', that is clearly also a 'seeing'. In the *LFMB* the priest moves the book to the altar's north end, making upon it and his face the sign of the cross with his thumb (Text B, lines 154–8). The *LFMB* gives no reason for moving the book (unlike Caxton in the 'Noble history of the exposition of the mass' in *The Golden Legend*).²⁸ Rather, in the *LFMB*, the sign of the cross is made on the face for the priest 'has mikel need of grace' in speaking Christ's words.²⁹ What matters is that during the Gospel-reading both priest and laity play separate parts, the concern being not the teaching of Scripture but that folk 'hear' – i.e. witness – the sacred words without necessarily the distraction of comprehension:

bot syn oure matir is of hering
 þer-of newe shal be oure lering.
 Clerkes heren on a manere,
 bot lewed men bos anoþer lere.³⁰

It is interesting that in Text C, a manuscript associated with Rievaulx Abbey, it is stated that those who cannot understand Latin should simply continue with their *Paternosters* while the Latin Gospel is read: Latin, not English, is regarded as sacred. When the priest says the *Paternoster* it is only necessary for the laity to recognise the word 'temptacionem', and then they must respond:

bot answeere at temptacionem
 set libera nos a malo, amen.
 hit were no need þe þis to ken,
 for who con not þis are lewed men.³¹

²⁸ William Caxton, *The golden legend*, London 1483 (ESTC S541), fo. 436v.

²⁹ *LFMB*, 16, text B, line 160.

³⁰ *Ibid* lines 171–4.

³¹ *Ibid*. 46, text B, lines 488–91.

Many further textual variants in addition to those already cited appear in the different copies of *LFMB*, again demonstrating its status as a living text. Text F, for instance, also begins rather differently, being, in Simmons's marginal commentary, '[a]dapted to the practice of smaller churches and chapels in England where the priest vested before the people'.³² Thus F provides an English prayer for the laity to say for the priest as he vests:

That he be clene in dede and thought,
That yuel spirit noy him nought
To fulfyll this sacrament
With clene herte and gode entent³³

This prayer again indicates that 'hearing' the mass is participative in terms of the laity's actions, while the priest celebrates, separately, in Latin.³⁴

It will be clear from its contents that the *LFMB* was distinct from the *Prymer*: or, *The lay folks' prayer book*, which was a more precise 'vernacular libretto' – in Aston's words – for the liturgy, devised we now know for very distinct purposes.³⁵ During the late medieval period primers, modelled on more prestigious Books of Hours, were some of 'the most common books of devotion to be found in the hand of lay people'.³⁶ Indeed, they continued to be widely used in England through the early reformist period up to Henry VIII's *Great primer* (1545).³⁷ Such primers catered at least in part for the growing habit whereby the laity followed books during church services, including sermons, a habit encouraged *inter alia* – it has been claimed – by contemporary developments in church architecture, notably the growth in the size of windows.

The *LFMB* was however different. Although the 'holster book' containing Text A of the *LFMB* could possibly have been used for such purposes

³² *LFMB*, 3. Maskell notes that 'though now they are lost, there were formerly numerous other volumes in which complete instructions were to be found for the due vesting of both the celebrant and his assistant': *Ancient liturgy* (1882 edn), 4–5.

³³ *LFMB*, 6, text F, lines 21–4.

³⁴ While in no sense tending towards anti-sacerdotalism both *LFMB* and the Tractarians clearly regarded eucharistic worship as corporate and of the whole Church. Simmons would have been well aware of the debates surrounding the issue of non-communicating attendance at the eucharist. See Alf Härdelin, *The Tractarian understanding of the eucharist*, Uppsala 1965, 280–90.

³⁵ Some dozen manuscript copies of the vernacular *Prymer* survive, listed in Littlehales edition of the *Lay folks' prayer book*: comparatively few, of course, in comparison with the many Latin versions that survive. Printed vernacular *Prymers* are however very numerous and may simply have replaced the manuscript versions subsequently deemed old-fashioned.

³⁶ Aston, *Lollards and reformers*, 122.

³⁷ See Charles C. Butterworth, *The English primers (1529–1545)*, Philadelphia, PA 1953.

(although its mixed content suggests that it might simply have been a 'commonplace miscellancy'), other larger manuscripts containing the *LFMB* can be more plausibly accounted for as helpful study guides for pious household use, prefiguring the kind of 'sermon manuals' developed in English evangelical circles from the early seventeenth century.³⁸ Numerous manuscripts demonstrating these trends have survived. Examples include the 'common profit' books designed for sharing vernacular works of devotion, such as John Colop's fifteenth-century collection of mystical and lollard texts,³⁹ and, from the previous century, major miscellanies containing devotional treatises, such as Magdalene College, Cambridge, MS 2498, which included an allegedly lollard 'farced' version of the thirteenth-century *Ancrene riwle*⁴⁰, or the massive Vernon manuscript (Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. Poet. A.1).⁴¹ This new focus on private or household reading of vernacular texts is also illustrated by the reworking of sermon-cycles for home consumption, such as John Mirk's *Festial*.

There are also other surviving vernacular guides to the mass that may be compared with the *LFMB*. For example, Margaret Aston has referred to 'B. Langforde's' vernacular *Meditatyonys for goostly exercyse, in the tyme of the masse*,⁴² surviving only in one early sixteenth-century manuscript (Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Wood empt. 17). And Caxton's widely circulated English version of the *Golden legend* (1483) concludes with a lengthy treatise entitled 'The noble history of the exposition of the mass' with the intention 'for herte deuoute [to] vnderstonde what it is to say masse/also to consecrate the body of our Lord the precious sacrament of thauter'.⁴³ Here each moment of the mass is theologically interpreted in its memorial aspect. Other less widely-circulated works offering comparable interpretations of the liturgy include the East Anglian Croxton *Play of the sacrament*, and John Lydgate's *Merita missae*. *LFMB* therefore falls into a distinct genre of vernacular devotional texts.

Simmons was well aware of these parallels, and he provided in his edition a series of appendices illustrating them. His appendix iv, for instance, is the text of the verse *Treatise of the manner and mede of the mass*, found in the

³⁸ Arnold Hunt, *The art of hearing: English preachers and their audiences, 1590–1640*, Cambridge 2010.

³⁹ See Wendy Scase, 'Reginald Pecock, John Carpenter and John Colop's "common-profit" books: aspects of book ownership and circulation in fifteenth-century London', *Medium Aevum* lxi (1992), 261–74.

⁴⁰ See Ralph Hanna, *London literature, 1300–1380*, Cambridge 2005.

⁴¹ See Wendy Scase (ed.), *The making of the Vernon manuscript*, Turnhout 2013.

⁴² Aston, *Lollards and reformers*, 123. Langforde's *Meditations* are quite comparable in content with the *LFMB*, and it is no surprise therefore that Simmons printed (*LFMB*, 168) an extract from that manuscript on the vesting of a priest.

⁴³ Caxton, *Golden legend*, fo. 435r.

Vernon manuscript.⁴⁴ Yet again, however, although this work has similarities to the *LFMB*, there are also substantial differences. There are indeed prayers in English during the priest's vesting and a form of confession, a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer and instructions to stand and 'hear' the Gospel even if it is not understood. However, the *Treatise* is essentially a teaching poem, concerned with 'learning' as well as 'hearing'. The poet explicitly writes:

¶ To calle on Crist. *with mylde chere*
 Lewed Men. I schal 3ou lere
 Whon pat þe prest. bi-ginnes.⁴⁵

Authorities such as St Ambrose and St Jerome are cited to explain the necessity and practical benefits of the mass. 'Hearing' it protects people against ageing or blindness, assists in daily work and cures sorrows. An early mass will protect you on a journey, and the unworthiness of a priest does not diminish the effects of the sacrament. Other appendices include a complete edition of a daring work that Simmons calls a 'Venus mass', being a parody of the mass addressed to Cupid, 'the mighty god of Love'.⁴⁶ Simmons also included Bidding Prayers according to the York Use; the York Hours of the Cross; the order of the mass for Trinity Sunday, from Minster Library, York, MS XVI A. 9, dated by Simmons to about 1425; a brief prose work on lay preparation for the mass (*c.* 1400); and finally a theological expositions of the eucharist more or less contemporary with the *LFMB*, including part of the account of the trial of Sir John Oldcastle who was burned in 1413 for heresy and sedition linked to lollardy.

Despite their differences, all such late medieval writings reflect a desire for vernacular exposition of the liturgy. The *LFMB* might thus be seen as simply one amongst a number of vernacular texts that emerged in the later medieval period to serve the needs of literate folk who sought pious engagement with the mass through witness and response. None however is as focused or action-oriented as the *LFMB*, which precisely instructs the 'lewed' worshipper on what to say and do.⁴⁷ Such works as the *LFMB* assumed the clear distinction between the clergy and the laity in the mass, emphasising the role of the latter, and they assumed a lay ignorance of Latin (an ignorance that was undoubtedly shared by many of the less

⁴⁴ For the most recent contextualising essays on this well-known, and massive, manuscript see Scase, *Making of the Vernon manuscript*.

⁴⁵ *A treatise of the manner and mede of the mass*, lines 185–7: *LFMB*, 133.

⁴⁶ *LFMB*, 389–95.

⁴⁷ Such concerns are mirrored in the Tractarian sense of the drama of the eucharist, the emphasis shifting from the sacrificial to the sacramental, and the corporate aspect of worship: Hårdelin, *Tractarian understanding*, 282.

well-educated clergy). Such works as the *LFMB* were not intended to instruct or provide theological speculation. In Katherine Zieman's words:

Guidance, rather, generally consists of advising their audiences how to react to the words they do not understand. In this manner they seek to fulfill the dual purpose of inventing forms of engagement in the Mass for the laity while affirming the distinctiveness of the clergy's own performance.⁴⁸

Worship, indeed, was the very opposite of 'common' inasmuch as the efficient utterance of the words of the Latin mass did not depend upon the comprehension of those who 'heard' them.⁴⁹ As Zieman puts it:

This 'hearing' ... is not the interpellative hearing synonymous with understanding. It does not imply any capacity for linguistic discrimination (i.e., it does not require 'listening') ... insofar as it might pertain to the language of the Mass, 'hearing' involves attending to its illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effects. Readers are told how to modulate their attention in accordance with the ceremonial rhythms of the service – what to attend to, what prayers they might say at any given moment, and for whom to pray. 'Hearing' Mass, therefore, does not even require the hearer to be silent, though lay speech is generally synchronized to function as a private and inaudible counterpart to the public speech of the service.⁵⁰

So far, so orthodox; however, Zieman's valuable insights hint at a politics of 'hearing' and understanding the mass by the lay people that suggests a liturgical complexity that invites further reflection.

For there is one sense in which the *LFMB* does align with lollard writings, along with other works of greater orthodoxy from the end of the fourteenth century onwards: its use of the vernacular in religious practice. Helen Spencer has noted the efflorescence of such writing, which she correlates with 'the enhanced prestige of English, the interests of an increasingly literate laity in more advanced matters of theology than the rudiments of Christian behaviour, and dissatisfaction with the Church, expressed by orthodox and heterodox alike'.⁵¹

However, the composition, possession and reading of vernacular texts could always attract suspicion, especially when indulged in by 'lesser' folk; it is no coincidence that the Earthquake Council of 1382 that condemned Wycliffe was of the view that heretical vernacular writings were involved in the Peasants' Revolt of the previous year. Suspicion of vernacular religion reached its height in the period following the 1407 *Constitutions* of Archbishop Thomas Arundel, which required the licensing of

⁴⁸ Katherine Zieman, *Singing the new song: literacy and liturgy in late medieval England*, Philadelphia 2008, 81.

⁴⁹ See Ramie Targoff, *Common Prayer: the language of public devotion in early modern England*, Chicago 2001, 26.

⁵⁰ Zieman, *Singing the new song*, 81.

⁵¹ Helen Spencer, *English preaching in the Late Middle Ages*, Oxford 1993, 14.

vernacular versions of the Bible, including works of impeccable orthodoxy such as Nicholas Love's gospel harmony *The mirror of the life of Jesus Christ* (a translation of the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes vitae Christi*). Even Bishop Reginald Pecock (d. in or after 1459), who undertook a programme of vernacular composition explicitly to counter the spread of lollard ideas, attracted condemnation; in 1457 Pecock was forced to make a recantation of notions deemed heretical, and to take part in a public burning of his own writings. There is an interesting parallel between the *LFMB* and Pecock's ideas, for the latter also saw the reading and rereading of vernacular texts as permitting 'the layman to memorize a fixed set of words which he could then repeat to others without distorting the information';⁵² Pecock himself refers to 'the hearing of other men's reading, or ... hearing of his own reading', thus 'assum[ing] the *speaking* of books'.⁵³ The *LFMB* and Pecock seem to have shared a similar theological mindset and presumably would have been liable to similar contemporary criticism.

Indeed we can see in a number of works, ranging from the *LFMB* to 'B. Langforde's' *Meditatyons*, how the potential existed for such challenges. Geoffrey Cuming has referred briefly to late medieval works of direction for the laity while attending mass in Latin, suggesting (albeit without any substantiating evidence) that such texts as the *LFMB* were 'in circulation among the more prosperous of the laity'.⁵⁴ Cuming also cites 'Langforde' as urging his reader to make the mass a 'daily meditation, to stir you to the diligent and compendious remembrance of the passion of Christ'.⁵⁵ This stress on the memorial aspect of the mass can be traced back in Western Church at least as far as Amalarius of Metz (c. 780–850), linked to York as a pupil of Alcuin, who in his influential and controversial work *Eclogae de officio missae* provides a dramatic outline of the 'rememorative allegory of the Mass'.⁵⁶ But it also aligns with the lollard tendency to interpret the eucharist as straightforward memorial. It seems a short step from the *LFMB* to the Catechism in the 1549 Prayer Book which required that children learn 'to say in theyr mother tongue the articles of the faith [in the Creed], the lordes praier [and] the ten commaundmentes'.⁵⁷

⁵² Ibid. 41.

⁵³ Aston, *Lollards and reformers*, 114, and references there cited.

⁵⁴ Cuming, *A history of Anglican liturgy*, 4.

⁵⁵ Dom Gregory Dix, *The shape of the liturgy*, Westminster 1947, 605.

⁵⁶ O. B. Hardison Jr, *Christian rite and Christian drama in the Middle Ages*, Baltimore 1965, 45.

⁵⁷ *The Book of Common Prayer: the texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. Brian Cummings Oxford 2011, 61. Unlike the Articles of Religion, which were a distinct document, the Tractarians regarded the Catechism, though not itself liturgical, as part of the Prayer Book, it being until 1661 an integral part of the rite of Confirmation: Hårdelin, *Tractarian understanding*, 49.

617 Furthermore, if lollardy is regarded, in Anne Hudson's terms, as a 'pre-
 618 mature Reformation', and given that the English Reformation was far less
 619 doctrinally exact than that of the Continent, there are certain telling simi-
 620 larities between the eucharistic teaching of Wycliffe and the Anglican
 621 revival of Tractarians in the nineteenth century. Both, with regard to the
 622 crucial issues of transubstantiation, argued from discussions of Aquinas
 623 on 'accident' and 'substance'.⁵⁸ Both insisted upon a clear doctrine of
 624 real presence. The *LFMB* was in its own time therefore potentially both
 625 orthodox and – like Pecock – suspect.

626 A final ambiguity illustrates the point. In her discussion, Zieman focuses
 627 on the moment of the reading of the Gospel which, in the B-text, instructs
 628 the laity: 'Whils hit is red, speke thou nought,/ bot thenk on him that dere
 629 the boght' (lines 183–4). She comments:

630 The advice to let the mind dwell upon Christ, rather than attend to the lesson itself,
 631 however, suggests that the writer is primarily concerned with maintaining the ritual
 632 decorum of the moment by having the laity provide the outward appearance of lis-
 633 tening rather than with the laity's understanding as such.⁵⁹

634 But these lines could also be understood as a Wycliffite moment, Wycliffite
 635 emphasising in his theology that in contemplating the eucharist the wor-
 636 shipper should be concerned with Christ and nothing else. Such advice
 637 is found also in the pseudo-Chaucerian and Wycliffite *Plowman's tale*,
 638 written in about 1400 in lollard circles and later included in sixteenth-
 639 century printed editions of Chaucer's works, where its (mendacious) pres-
 640 ence was used to align that subtle – and very Catholic – court poet with his
 641 heresiarch contemporary.

642 *Simmons's reception of The lay folks' mass book*

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 646 What of Simmons's treatment of the *LFMB*? Was he simply guilty of 'fey
 647 antiquarianism'? Certainly the 'diplomatic' editing of the work – with the
 648 'black-letter' title page an inheritance from the early nineteenth-century
 649 antiquary-editors, the representation of rubrics through emboldened
 650 print, and the carefully-marked expansion of contractions through deploy-
 651 ment of italics – is fussy by modern editorial standards, but such practices
 652 were commonplace in other EETS editions of the period. Was there,
 653 however, something more interesting going on?

654 A beginning might be made with the 'Lay folks' terminology, Simmons's
 655 invention and which he himself seems to have envisaged as covering the
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658 ⁵⁸ Richard Rex, *The Lollards*, London 2002, 43–5, and Robert Isaac Wilberforce,
 659 *The doctrine of the holy eucharist*, London 1853.

660 ⁵⁹ Zieman, *Singing the new song*, 82.

other volumes that share it. The terminology is perhaps justifiable for the *LFMB*, although less so for the very different *Lay folks' catechism*, which is clearly intended by Archbishop Thoresby of York for the instruction of his clergy. The third title was of course *The lay folks' prayer book*. These three 'lay folks' books were liturgically and theologically quite different, but the title that linked them derived from Simmons's Victorian High Church leanings, which envisaged the three texts as linked tracts.

Simmons's discussion of sources is another clue to his intentions. Working from four manuscript texts, Simmons constructed an elaborate theory of an original French text from Rouen composed by one 'Dan Jeremy', sometime canon of Rouen and archdeacon of Cleveland in the archdiocese of York.⁶⁰ His theory about the *LFMB's* origins has been accepted without question by liturgical scholars such as C. J. Cuming and Eamon Duffy.⁶¹ Richard Pfaff has pointed out, however, the tenuous nature of Simmons's argument for making links between the *LFMB* and Rouen's liturgical use, the privileging of the northern text and the identity of 'Dan Jeremy' (though as to the latter, in fairness, Simmons does admit that 'this is a mere guess'⁶²):

Major questions appear at once as to the soundness of [Simmons's] inferences; but if they should be correct – above all, *if* 'Jeremy's' putative original is a text of the last third of the twelfth century and *if* the Englishing was done without serious alteration of the ritual detail of the original – then *The Lay Folks' Mass Book* might help in pointing to an earlier stratum of liturgy at York than the extant service books allow us to reach. These are, however, large 'if's, and the whole train of reasoning needs to be treated with caution.⁶³

Simmons did indeed hint at a different explanation but forbore from making it explicit:

Some of these questions bear upon certain doctrines and practices that were received or allowed in the Church of England when the manuscripts were written, and were afterwards either formally rejected or advisedly put away: but the circumstance that I am a clergyman of the reformed Church, and that I am one of those 'who according to the order of' our Holy Reformation have deliberately and with good reason 'renounced the errors, corruptions, and superstitions, as well as the Papal Tyranny', which once here prevailed, has not appeared to me to be a reason why I should accompany the notes with the running comment of a controversialist. It is from no failure in loyalty in this matter, but because it is due to the E.E.T. Society – and the list will show that there are members who do not belong to the Church of England – that I have been careful to avoid the expression

⁶⁰ *LFMB*, p. xli.

⁶¹ As in E. Duffy, *The stripping of the altars: traditional religion in England, c. 1400–c. 1580*, 2nd edn, New Haven–London 2005, 118.

⁶² *LFMB*, p. xl.

⁶³ Pfaff, *Liturgy in medieval England*, 461.

of my own opinion upon points which are the subject of religious controversy; and I have done this, not because I had not formed opinions in respect to them, but because I had long arrived at very definite conclusions, and I thought I had no right to obtrude them upon my fellow members, who had not joined the Society in the expectation of any such encounter.⁶⁴

Despite this disclaimer, it seems that Simmons aimed to construct an argument that sets the *LFMB* firmly within the development of Gallican liturgy, through the Norman influence up to the York use that developed after the consecration of York Minster in 1472. He thus established his own lineage as a modern prebendary of York (we might note the interesting footnote citing prayer used 'at the opening of each day's session in both houses of [the northern] Convocation'): a potentially attractive apostolic liturgical continuity.

The next clues as to what Simmons was attempting lie in his marginal commentary, specifically with reference to his prioritised text B. Behind Simmons's editorial work lies both the Oxford Movement's Romanticism⁶⁵ and the medievalism that gave rise to the 'making of Middle English'. For instance, Simmons's discussion of the elevation of the host in the *LFMB* might be noted:

It may be noticed that, so far as these words are concerned,⁶⁶ there is nothing in them to prevent their being used by those who protest against the doctrine of transubstantiation or any local presence of 'whole Christ' upon the altar; but it is very evident that this hymn was not intended to be so used, from the fact that concomitance is elsewhere taught in the same text.⁶⁷

Simmons's comment in the first part of this quotation – albeit immediately dismissed with the reference to the doctrine of concomitance⁶⁸ – is an indirect reference to lollard thinking on the eucharist, which contested the nature of the 'real presence'. Such a protest against transubstantiation lies at the heart of Wycliffite theology, earning Wycliffe papal condemnation.⁶⁹ Wycliffe's rejection of transubstantiation is difficult to articulate precisely as he is generally more eager to condemn his opponents than define his own position, but it is rooted in a very Oxfordian argument about the

⁶⁴ *LFMB*, pp. xiv–xv.

⁶⁵ See Yngve Brilioth, 'The Romantic Movement and neo-Anglicanism', in his *The Anglican revival: studies in the Oxford Movement*, London 1933, 56–76.

⁶⁶ *LFMB*, 40, text B, lines 440–5.

⁶⁷ *LFMB*, p. xxix.

⁶⁸ The doctrine of concomitance holds that Christ's body, being indivisible, is fully present in both elements, thus justifying the laity's restriction to one kind. It was emphasised at the Council of Constance in 1415 which posthumously condemned John Wycliffe and declared Jan Hus a heretic. The B-text of the *LFMB* explicitly refers in lines 235–6 to 'And so I trow þat housel es/ bothe flesshe & blode'.

⁶⁹ Rex, *The Lollards*, 42–5.

749 theology of Thomas Aquinas regarding ‘accidents without a subject’.⁷⁰ In
750 the words of Anne Hudson:

751 the important matter in the eucharist, by Wyclif’s thinking, was not any explan-
752 ation of the change, no juggling of the physical or pseudo-physical terms, but
753 the meaning ... Man contemplating the eucharist should be concerned with
754 Christ and not with bread and wine, let alone with accidents and subjects.⁷¹
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756 Why then did Simmons make this reference? The explanation seems to lie
757 in an understanding of the eucharist rooted in the Romanticism of the
758 Oxford Movement, and this short reference opens onto a much larger
759 theological issue.

760 Though Simmons’s movements in 1836 are not known, it is not impos-
761 sible that he heard Pusey’s *Lectures on types and prophecies*, delivered in
762 Oxford in that year, which contain Pusey’s first lengthy discussion of the
763 eucharist. In these lectures, Pusey affirms a real presence ‘conveyed by
764 means of the elements’, but is quite clear in his rejection of the doctrine
765 of concomitance, looking back to the authority of Scripture and opposing
766 the manner of administration in the Latin rite. In short, Pusey’s Tractarian
767 understanding of the eucharist bears uncanny similarities to that of
768 Wycliffe, while avoiding later lollard simplifications that seem to reduce
769 the sacrament to a straightforward memorial.⁷²

770 What might this context suggest for Simmons’s conception of the *LFMB*?
771 What he seemed to be seeking was a work that prefigured his own variety of
772 Anglicanism; although he was too honest and subtle a scholar to ignore the
773 difference (viz. on concomitance), the *LFMB*’s emphasis on the ‘owen
774 presence’ spoke to his own understanding of the sacrament, and this
775 approach is supported by his specific reference to Newman’s *Grammar of*
776 *assent* (1870) as an authority on the ‘dogma of the real presence’.⁷³ His edi-
777 torial enterprise was clearly intended as part of a larger Tractarian attempt
778 to reconstruct the medieval roots of Anglicanism: roots which he found in a
779 particular engagement with vernacular religion, especially what he con-
780 ceived of as lollardy.⁷⁴ *LFMB*, then, which sat between English-language
781 devotion – traditionally seen as ‘protestant’ – and pre-Reformation
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784 ⁷⁰ Cf. E. B. Pusey’s discussion of transubstantiation in *A letter to the Right Rev. Father in*
785 *God, Richard, lord bishop of Oxford, on the tendency to Romanism imputed to doctrines held of old,*
786 *as now, in the English Church*, 2nd edn, Oxford 1839.

787 ⁷¹ Anne Hudson, *The premature Reformation*, Oxford 1988, 282.

788 ⁷² *Ibid.* 284. Pusey’s *Types and prophecies* was never published, but see B. Douglas,
789 ‘Pusey’s “Lectures on types and prophecies of the Old Testament”: implications for
790 eucharistic theology’, *International Journal of Systematic Theology* xiv (2012), 194–216.

791 ⁷³ *LFMB*, 225.

792 ⁷⁴ This perhaps accounts for why he and Nolloth tried to find lollardy in their edition
793 of the Prayer Book – although, as Hudson points out, in that they were possibly pro-
794 ceeding beyond the facts.

religious practice – and thus catholic – would seem to have spoken rather well to his own nineteenth-century agendas. He would have appreciated too the *LFMB*'s action-focused content. Simmons was pedantically concerned with the importance of action and movement in the eucharist, as is evident from his lengthy essay 'Standing before the Lord's Table' with its discussion of the 'rubrical determination of the celebrant's position' and the 'inextinguishable rule of catholic ritual'. He would have found such 'rubrical determinations', literally in their red ink, in manuscripts of the *LFMB*.

Simmons is best regarded as a scholar-priest in a 'learned church'⁷⁵ whose scholarship often preferred the term 'English Church' to Church of England, and which emphasised liturgical continuity rather than Reformation discontinuity as evidence of the Catholicity of their Church. He was not alone; another parish priest, Frederick George Lee, whose independent means allowed him to dedicate himself to study, produced the *Directorium Anglicanum* in 1858, described by Nigel Yates as the *vademecum* of advanced Tractarians.⁷⁶ Its full title included the phrase 'According to the ancient use of the Church of England', emphasising that its purpose was to incorporate late medieval traditions as far as possible into worship based on the Book of Common Prayer. The link with such texts as the *LFMB* is clear. And it was not only the Tractarians who were editing and recovering early liturgical texts. The Parker Society was founded in 1841 'for the publication of the Works of the Fathers and Early Writers of The Reformed English Church', supported by both High Churchmen and Evangelical clergy. (A group of Tractarians responded by founding the Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology.)

Simmons, though now largely forgotten or dismissed, clearly moved in distinguished intellectual circles both within and beyond the Church. His article on the position of the celebrant at the eucharist was a contribution to a larger debate among Tractarians and their followers on 'unusual attitudes in prayer', Simmons following the conservative example of Newman who to his last days as an Anglican celebrated from the north end of the altar, in line with the practice of *LFMB* (Text B, 156).⁷⁷ Significant also is Simmons's insistence upon apostolicity and his interest in the Prayer Book of 1549, given importance by the Tractarians since Pusey's *Tract 81* (1837), again seen in terms of its continuity with the late medieval English Church.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Kirby, *Historians of the Church of England*, 2.

⁷⁶ Nigel Yates, *Buildings, faith and worship: the liturgical arrangement of Anglican Churches, 1600–1900*, 2nd edn, Oxford 2000, 142.

⁷⁷ See Henry Parry Liddon, *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey*, iv, 2nd edn, London 1897, 211, and Härdelin, *Tractarian understanding*, 310–11.

⁷⁸ In *Tract 3* (1833), J. H. Newman wrote that 'there are some who wish the Consecration Prayer in the Holy Eucharist to be what it was in King Edward's first book; there are others who think this would be an approach to Popery': *Tracts for the*

837 What all these approaches reveal is a liturgical imagination steeped in
838 the theology and manner of celebration of the mass that might be expected
839 from an Anglican who had come through the Oxford of Keble,
840 Tractarianism and Ritualism and yet could speak of the Church of
841 England as 'reformed' by our Holy Reformation. Simmons's conception
842 of the Middle Ages was thus profoundly nineteenth-century. He con-
843 structed the mass of the *LFMB* in his own image, and this process then
844 fed his own theology and liturgical sense: a perfect hermeneutic circle.
845 He found in the *LFMB*, and the texts that he associated with it, what he
846 was looking for. And as we have seen, like a distant mirror, the *LFMB*
847 reflected back a delicate late medieval ambiguity between orthodox tradi-
848 tion and vernacular innovation that, for those who could see, pointed
849 forward to trends yet to come. At the same time his scholarship earned
850 Simmons a place in Percy Dearmer's widely popular *The parson's handbook*
851 (1899), the *LFMB*, as well as the EETS *Prymer*, appearing there in the list of
852 books quoted. The scholarly Canon Simmons was perhaps in Dearmer's
853 mind an exception among the clergy whose lack of liturgical knowledge
854 has resulted in the 'lamentable confusion, lawlessness, and vulgarity
855 which are conspicuous in the Church at this time'.⁷⁹ Clergy like
856 Simmons, on the other hand, sought an order in liturgy and ceremonial
857 that was at once in continuity with the English Church of late medievalism,
858 and true in his own terms, at the same time, to the Book of Common Prayer
859 of the Church of England.
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878 *times*, new edn, i (1833–4), London 1838, no. 3, p. 1). Hårdelin affirms both the importance
879 of the 1549 version for the Tractarians, and their conservatism in matters of litur-
880 gical reform: *Tractarian understanding*, 259.

⁷⁹ Percy Dearmer, *The parson's handbook*, new edn, London 1903, 1.