

them in their own way, an altogether different thing and the core of Protestantism, which for the Church as the divinely warranted interpreter of Scripture substituted private interpretation without guarantee.

When sanction came for an English Bible and primer, Cranmer was primate and the Reformation Parliament had done its revolutionary work, so that orthodoxy was determined henceforth by the royal pope and his counsellors. Doctrinal shifts could make proscribed texts into prescribed ones. It is fascinating to watch the author trace the political events and the struggle between tradition and innovation as they affected, and were reflected in, the editing and printing of these prayer books, which can sometimes even have their dates established by reference to Henry's current wife. Occasionally, apparent unfamiliarity with the Catholic sources leads the author to attribute Lutheran origins erroneously, e.g. to the grace (p. 33), still used today in monasteries, and to the prayer of Jonas (p. 37), a standard feature in earlier Latin Sarum primers. But a work so painstaking as Mr Butterworth's, built on close study of original material now scattered in a dozen libraries in two continents, stands in no danger of being superseded.

DAVID ROGERS

A HISTORY OF FRANCE. By Lucien Romier. Translated and adapted by A. L. Rowse. (Macmillan, 30s.)

To write a complete history of a great country in one volume is a noble and very difficult task, the difficulty lying in the proportions chosen between narration and commentary. A mere factual record would be dull, but if one generalizes over the features of a period, one has to presume that the reader has at least a bare knowledge of the facts one is generalizing about. M. Romier has, rightly, not hesitated to take this risk, and to assume that the reader has a basic knowledge of French history, and as a consequence this is, as a whole, a very readable book and M. Romier's comments are lively, balanced and enlightening. Perhaps he is happiest in his description of the evolution of Roman Gaul into Capetian France, with a valuable emphasis on the social changes brought about during this period. Mr Rowse read this book in manuscript and made it a labour of love to translate and complete it after the author's death. His translation, after a shaky start, gains in pace and idiom as the book proceeds, and the part he has written himself, the later chapters, are a very useful summary of France's immediate historical background. It may sound ungenerous to say that Mr Rowse occasionally writes as an Englishman, but one feels sure that M. Romier would be as grateful as all the readers of this book will be for this act of piety.

P.F.