

feature of the book is its attempt to challenge the customary disparagement of the Athenian Neoplatonists working in the period leading up to 529 A.D. The overall result is a splendid and fascinating work which must certainly be reckoned as a major contribution to scholarship and as compulsory reading for anyone seriously concerned with the philosophy and theology of time and creation. This is not to say that the book has no blemishes. It is somewhat uneven since while some of the ideas it touches on get a lot of discussion others are passed over very rapidly. In addition to this, Sorabji's philosophical conclusions or suggestions (he can be remarkably undogmatic) are sometimes arrived at too quickly, as is the case with his treatment of God and time, in which he comes down against the tradition represented by writers like Aquinas without taking up some obvious questions raised by his own remarks. To give one example: he finds it hard to see how a timeless God could act (pp.256 ff.), yet he does not consider to what extent God's action is in created things and is not a matter of successiveness in him. But this is not the place to quibble about details. Sorabji has written a fine book, and I know of nothing to rival it.

BRIAN DAVIES OP

LUKE—ACTS by Donald Juel. (London: SCM Press) 1984. 138 pp. pb. £5.50

Donald Juel's book is yet another simple introduction to the reading of the two parts of Luke's literary work. It begins fairly conventionally with a broad survey of the themes adumbrated in the birth narratives and developed in the Gospel and Acts and treats these in a simple and effective manner. It becomes much more exciting in the second half when the author begins to develop an understanding of Luke in the light of recent studies by N.H. Dahl, J. Jervell and D.L. Tiede: The reader may ponder whether it is significant that all of them are Lutherans. Juel insists that Luke is the most optimistic of the NT writers with a view of the world as an open place in which despite opposition the power of the gospel is effective. With Jervell he insists that Luke does not describe the growth of a new Israel composed of Gentiles (but did anybody ever seriously suggest that there was no room for Jews in the new Israel?) but rather a process of division within the one Israel between unbelieving and believing Jews and the accession of Gentile believers. Within this Israel the law continues in force and even Gentile Christians are required to keep the parts of the law appropriate for Gentiles—an interpretation which is independently questioned by S.G. Wilson in *Luke and the Law*. Like the Gospels of Matthew and John Luke's work is to be seen as intended for Jewish Christians in the period after the fall of Jerusalem, cut adrift from their heritage as a result of the rejection of the Messiah; he wrote a pastoral work which tells a story by means of which his readers might locate themselves as the true heirs of Israel's heritage. Here Juel comes from a rather different angle to a position not unlike that of R. Maddox in *The Purpose of Luke-Acts*. Despite its apparently simple beginning, therefore this book will take the reader into some of the crucial issues of current Lucan scholarship. These issues are still matters of keen debate, and we can be grateful to Juel for presenting one of the possibilities in such a clear and attractive way.

I. HOWARD MARSHALL