

ory and Gnostic texts, and of the Dead Sea Scrolls is much fuller than Barrett's. Barrett gives a more comprehensive selection of 'papyri illustrating social and economic conditions' than does Kee under 'personal letters'. Kee's references from Jewish eschatological literature are more extensive and comprehensive, but perhaps Barrett's more systematic arrangement of the material under the two headings 'literary forms' and 'essential notions' is more helpful. In general, Kee gives longer extracts than Barrett and the book contains more pages devoted to text and fewer tak-

en up with introductions and notes. Finally, Kee's bibliography is too short to be of much help to students, his index of names and subjects is short, and there is no index of references.

Both these books are valuable to students of the New Testament. Kee's arrangement of material makes his book a better general introduction, but if students already own a copy of Barrett's book, they need not buy Kee's. Kee admirably succeeds in his aim.

MARGARET PAMMENT

THE POETRY OF THOMAS HARDY edited by Patricia Clements and Juliet Grindle
Vision Press Ltd. £10.95.

For those of us who think that Hardy is at least as great a poet as he is novelist, it is good to see the Vision Press following up its excellent book on the novels with *The Poetry of Thomas Hardy*. It is a collection of eleven essays, the first three investigating aspects of Hardy's craft, the next four concerned with more general matters such as relationships between the poems and the novels, and the final four looking at patterns of ideas and their expression. The joint editors are to be congratulated on the satisfying and wide-ranging pattern of the book, and on having assembled a team of scholarly and perceptive contributors who are united in their admiration and regard for the poetry. How little Dr Leavis who, in the thirties, dismissed Hardy's poetry as great only in respect of half-a-dozen poems, and other critics of that time, and later, who have damned with faint praise or no praise at all, could have foreseen that nearly fifty years later so much attention would be given to it. And how right T. E. Lawrence was when in April 1928 he wrote to the widowed Mrs Hardy, 'He (T. H.) will defend himself, very very completely, when people listen to him again. As you know, there will be a wave of detraction ... and then the bright young critics will rediscover him, and it will be lawful for a person in the know to speak well of him ... all that's needful is to forget the fuss for fifty years, and then wake up and see him no longer as a battlefield but part of the ord-

inary man's heritage.'

So many of Hardy's poems are harmonious and lyrical that it seems astonishing that his work was so often dismissed as harsh and awkward. Isobel Grundy in an outstanding essay entitled 'Hardy's Harshness' – nicely placed by the editors at the beginning of the book – analyses the nature of this harshness, shows that it is the result of Hardy's experimental and inventive approach to language, was a deliberate choice, often offers the reader 'the experience of wonder at the usual', and ends by convincingly illustrating the way in which the idiosyncrasies of his style are perfectly fitted to convey a sense of the anomalous position, in his view, of consciousness in a universe of nescient striving forces. It is an essay full of good things, such as the observation that Hardy was far fonder of puns than has so far been realised.

The other two essays on Hardy's craftsmanship – 'As Rhyme Meets Rhyme' and 'Emotion Put into Measure' – have the same touch of distinction, and all three essays should do much to convince the open-minded reader that, far from being a blundering amateur, Hardy, as poet, was a technician of prodigious knowledge and ability. Ronald Marken writes a sensitive and thoughtful essay on Hardy's use of rhyme. Several poems are examined in detail, and he concludes that 'His experiments, accomplishments, and triumphs with rhyme are more than usually various, the effects ranging through the bizarre,

brash, humorous, plain, and predictable to the deft and exquisitely subtle. They must not be taken for granted'. Neither will S. C. Neuman allow us to take Hardy's use of rhythm for granted. For me there has been no better definition of poetry than Hardy's 'Emotion put into Measure', and Dr Neuman demonstrates the importance of understanding how Hardy uses metre, of realising that his prosody has a 'rational content'. The subtle analysis of the metre of 'The Master and the Leaves' is a fine example of modern techniques of criticism at their best, promoting understanding through awareness of the existence of variant readings, and it is rewarding to find evidence that the *Variorum* edition of the poetry is also helping understanding. May *Variorum* editions of Hardy's novels be not long delayed!

The central four essays have as subject matter the relationship between two of the novels and certain poems ('The Mellstock Quire and *Tess* in Hardy's Poetry' by Rosemary L. Eakins); a consideration of Hardy's unhappiness and a crisis in his career in the 1890s in the light of his response to the Oedipus plays of Sophocles ('Thoughts from Sophocles: Hardy in the '90s' by Jeremy V. Steele); a study of what Hardy and Meredith had in common in subject and technique ('Thomas Hardy and George Meredith' by Cornelia Cook); and an examination of the 'large controlling ideas' behind *The Dynasts* ('Hardy's Inconsistent Spirits and the Philosophical Form of *The Dynasts*' by G. Glen Wickens). If these are not so important and rewarding as the first three, they are in their different ways all competent and useful contribu-

tions to our knowledge. Rosemary Eakins, for example, makes a helpful and comprehensive summary of the poems which have links with *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *Tess*, even though I should not want to go along with her in seeing the 'Quire' poems as a conscious attempt by Hardy to make amends for the burlesque treatment of the quire in the novel.

In the final four essays we are intensely involved with the nature of Hardy's thought and its expression in verse. In 'Hardy and "The Cell of Time"' Patricia Ingham describes the recurring features of his treatment of time, and, in a thoughtful and stimulating essay, concludes that it is 'retrospective, denaturing, static, claustrophobic, and largely inescapable'. Simon Gatrell in 'Travelling Man' very cleverly explores Hardy's use of travelling as a metaphor, and, in doing so, makes some illuminating comments on the use of repetitive structures with incremental effects, while Jon Stallworthy in the most esoteric of all the essays looks at Hardy's fascination with the moon goddess. In the most difficult and philosophic of the essays Patricia Clements describes some of the ways in which he measured and corrected 'the mind's formalizations by submitting its experience to reconsideration'. This leads her to some valuable insights into his exploration of reality, his patterns of repetition or return, his use of an imagery of fire and strong light, and into his skill in progressively redefining the words he uses. The quality of mind and research exhibited here is typical of the whole book and bodes well for future Hardy scholarship.

JAMES GIBSON

PREOCCUPATIONS: Selected Prose 1968-1978 by Seamus Heaney, *Faber & Faber*, London 1980, pp 224 £7.95.

SELECTED POEMS 1965-1975 by Seamus Heaney, *Faber & Faber*, London 1980, pp 136 £3.95 and £1.95.

Preoccupations comprises half-a-dozen public lectures topped up with a dozen review pieces and some short autobiographical vignettes. It's a genial, warm, enjoyable book, but I didn't find myself particularly engaged, excited or even illuminated

by it. The lectures rarely display the sharper edges of critical analysis but mainly offer the friendly feel of a poet mulling over the concerns of colleagues among a fellowship of practitioners: quotations from the poems, journals, workbooks or