

ship, it gives powerful expression to the fundamental approach of a theologian of

note. But they will be well advised to read it in German if they can.

MAURICE WILES

THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY: SOURCES AND DOCUMENTS by Howard Clark Kee. *SPCK* 1980. pp xii + 270 Paperback £4.95.

Howard Kee describes his aim in this way: 'To help provide (students) with a sense in some depth of the cultural, religious and historical situation in which Christianity arose' (p ix). The material 'is arranged partly by form and partly topically, with a maximum of text (in translation) and a minimum of introduction and comment' (p ix). Occasionally small black and white photographs of places and objects illustrate the texts.

The texts are arranged in two main sections:

- 1 Historical sources;
- 2 Literary texts and folk-literary sources.

Each main section is then subdivided: political history, religious history, and meaning in history; literary texts and non-literary material from the Eastern Mediterranean. Professor Kee helps the reader to understand the texts without long introductions by careful arrangement, so that a single short introductory note serves a number of texts, which help to elucidate one another. For example, the section on meaning in history contains examples of Jewish apocalyptic (Jubilees), Jewish mystical writing (Philo), Hellenistic ethical writing (IV Maccabees), and Roman eschatological speculation (Virgil's Fourth Eclogue). Similarly, there is an extremely useful section on Jewish interpretation of Scripture with examples from the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan, Midrash Sifre, Mechilta on Exodus, the allegorical interpretation of Philo, non-rabbinic midrashim from the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Pseudo-Philo.

Inevitably, the book invites comparison with C. K. Barrett's *The New Testament Background: selected documents*, 1956, *SPCK*. Most of the material is found in both books, and one wonders about the publishing policy of *SPCK* since Barrett's book is apparently still available in a paperback at the same price as Kee's. The structure is different in each case. Barrett's book has the following main sections: the

Roman Empire, the papyri, inscriptions, the philosophers, the Hermetic literature, mystery religions, Jewish history, Rabbinic literature, Philo, Josephus, the Septuagint, and Apocalyptic, with an appendix of Jewish sectarian documents. There is something of a biographical interest, since the 'Roman Empire' consists of accounts about each emperor from Augustus to Domitian, the 'philosophers' consists of accounts about Heraclitus, Plato, Zeno and the earlier Stoics, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Epicurus, and the philosophic missionary; 'Jewish history' consists of accounts of the Maccabees, the High Priests, Herod the Great and the procurators (as well as accounts of Jewish sects and of the two wars against the Romans and their aftermath); 'Rabbinic literature and Rabbinic Judaism' includes accounts about particular rabbis, and the long section on Josephus includes an account of his life. Kee does not share this biographical interest. His divisions are made on the basis of the subject and form and this means that a fuller picture emerges from each section than is possible with Barrett's arrangement. For example, Kee juxtaposes Jewish history and Roman policy in the eastern provinces so that one throws light on the other. Similarly, the section on religious history juxtaposes Jewish religious institutions and practices with an account of the imperial cult in the east, and accounts of popular religion (the mysteries, saviour cults and magic), and this section is brought to a close with a long extract from Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* on the church in the apostolic age. Only under the heading 'popular tales and biographical narratives' does Kee bring together popular lives of philosophers, miracle stories from Rabbinic and Hellenistic sources and Talmudic parables.

Barrett's treatment of Rabbinic Judaism and of the philosophers is more detailed than Kee's. Kee's treatment of revelat-

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,