

THEY ASKED FOR A PAPER, by C. S. Lewis; Geoffrey Bles; 16s.

Professor Lewis's writing still bears the springtime bloom of *Perelandra* and *The Great Divorce*. Of course there is a deeper perception and a warmer sensibility, but one is still astonished (I think that is scarcely too strong a word) by the fresh keenness of mind that he brings to bear on subjects as diverse as Sir Walter Scott and the Majesty of God. The papers in this book written at various times over the last twenty years bear no more claim to homogeneity than the mind of the writer. Different readers will light on different points for comment. I was most notably impressed by the awareness of God as a Person, especially in the last two papers; one a sermon, the other an address to the Oxford Socratic Club. In the address to the Socratic Club Professor Lewis argues with a clinical detachment and a lively wit, but all these energies are bent to showing that belief is the response to a person, and so religion is not the conclusion of an argument but a state of being which engages the whole of a man. In the last paper, '*The Weight of Glory*', we are treated to a splendid (in the true sense of that word) account of Beatitude. Again and again one is delighted at the way in which Professor Lewis keeps his head amidst the clouds of glory, and by sustaining a firm line of reasoning not only lights up our minds but brings theological truth into immediate perspective. 'Perhaps it seems rather crude to describe glory as the fact of being "noticed" by God. But this is almost the language of the New Testament. St Paul promises to those who love God not, as we should expect, that they will know Him, but that they will be known by Him'. Time and again ancient truths are given a 'shot in the arm' like that. Professor Lewis loves perennial truth; he pleads for more *pudor*, 'shyness where men ought to be shy', and will stand no humbug about worn-out notions like the literary impact of the Authorized Version. All the time it is our minds that are receiving the 'shot in the arm'.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

THE OXFORD BOOK OF WELSH VERSE, edited by Thomas Parry; Clarendon Press; 25s.

Sir Thomas Parry, in his introduction to an anthology of nearly four hundred poems from the sixth century to today, emphasizes the strength of the Welsh bardic tradition but rightly questions the assumption that its rigid formalities have prevented a spontaneous poetic evolution. It is true that the technical requirements of Welsh *cynghanedd* (which so fascinated Gerald Manley Hopkins, and indeed considerably influenced him) can seem a sort of acrostic, but in fact they correspond to the genius of the language. There can scarcely be another literature in Europe which reflects so remarkable a continuity.

This admirable collection takes its proper place in the Oxford Books of Verse, but one is left regretting the limited audience it must have. It is of little