

## BOOK REVIEWS.

DIFFICULTIES : BEING A CORRESPONDENCE ABOUT THE CATHOLIC RELIGION between Ronald Knox and Arnold Lunn. (London : Eyre & Spottiswoode, Ltd. ; 7/6 net.)

In this controversy Mr. Lunn, enjoying the advantage of the initiative, has trailed his coat and Fr. Knox has accepted battle on ground of his opponent's choosing. The idea of the correspondence was suggested by Mr. Lunn. In his letters he states his difficulties, restricting each letter to the elaboration of a single point or a series of connected points. Fr. Knox replies, answering each difficulty *seriatim*. The correspondence consists of thirty-two letters. Mr. Lunn chivalrously allows Fr. Knox to wind up the discussion. There is an explanatory preface by Mr. Lunn, and the correspondence is crowned with an index.

Mr. Lunn shows himself well equipped for his attack. His range of reading and study is extremely wide. It is evident that he has tried to find out and to understand what the Church holds and teaches. He does know something about the Church. In his opening letter he admits that the *a priori* case for Catholicism is quite plausible and that a divine institution appointed to preserve the teaching of Christ is a reasonable supposition. If he is a sceptic he is an intelligent not a stupid sceptic. He can concede a point. He asks : How can the existence of bad popes be reconciled with the fact that the election to the Papacy is directly inspired by the Holy Ghost? Fr. Knox answers that the Church makes no claim to the infallibility of conclaves. Mr. Lunn stands corrected, but his difficulties cannot always be answered in this easy way.

The attack covers a wide area. Besides Alexander VI, we have Torquemada, Infallibility, Galileo, Indulgences, Jonas and the whale, free will, eternal punishment, etc., etc. The material of many a controversy, it is true, but here put forward with a freshness, an urbanity and a sweet reasonableness which it is a pleasure to acknowledge. The advantage, as Mr. Lunn admits, lies with the attacker. Fr. Knox has undoubtedly the more difficult task, made doubly difficult by the fact that the attack is extensive rather than intensive. He has to show that the faith is reasonable. He has succeeded admirably. Mr. Lunn submits the debate to the adjudication of the reader ; but victory or defeat is beside the point. Mr. Lunn is his own umpire. We thank them for a stimulating debate.

## Book Reviews

It is interesting to recall a book published nearly a hundred years ago which had its origin in a controversy conducted on somewhat similar lines. The book is by John Henry Newman. Its title is : Lectures on the Prophetical Office of the Church viewed relatively to Romanism and Popular Protestantism. In his preface Newman writes : Great portions of a correspondence which the writer began with a learned and zealous member of the Gallican Church are also incorporated in it. In the *Apologia* we have the fuller statement : it was first written in the shape of controversial correspondence with a learned French priest ; then it was recast and delivered in lectures at St. Mary's. Lastly . . . it was re-written for publication. The book was 'chiefly written against Romanism,' though the main object is not controversy but 'to furnish an approximation towards the correct theory of the duties and office of the Church Catholic.' 'Romanism possesses the most systematic theory concerning the Church.' 'Rome supplies a doctrine, but an untrue one.' To attack Romanism was the most convenient way of explaining the Tractarian theory—the *Via Media*. (Nearly thirty years later Newman candidly admits that the spirit of the volume is very fierce.) It dealt with the Catholic position in 'its traditional action and its authorised teaching as represented by its prominent writers.' Which is precisely Mr. Lunn's plan of campaign. The attack is less extensive than Mr. Lunn's, as the author does not deal with the sacerdotal office of the Church. Of course many of the prominent writers used by Mr. Lunn are modern, but there is a continuity of matter in controversy about the Catholic Religion. The book was published in 1838. Seven years later Newman was received into the Catholic Church.

C.N.L.

**BRAVE NEW WORLD.** By Aldous Huxley. (Chatto & Windus ; 7/6.)

This *Brave New World* has already received so much publicity that we may be spared the painful necessity of describing it again. It is the Utopia of the ideals of our age, the super-servile state of 'Community, Identity and Stability,' the *reductio ad absurdum* of our civilization. Mr. Huxley projects us into the year 632 of the Fordian Era, when Science has wiped all tears from our eyes, when the world is made safe and comfy for everyone, when men (if such they can be called) have gained the whole world just because they have lost their own souls. State-controlled Science benevolently supervises the length and breadth of human existence, from its conception in the bottles