

## REVIEWS

THE APOCALYPSE OF SAINT JOHN. By R. J. Loenertz, O.P., translated by Hilary Carpenter, Provincial O.P. (Sheed and Ward; 8s. 6d.)

Fr Raymond Loenertz, a member of the Dominican Historical Institute in Rome, is a most able and enterprising medieval historian, especially with regard to the history of the Order, an expert on Byzantine affairs, and a remarkable linguist, having command (it is said) of over twenty languages. He is a Luxemburger, active and energetic (aged 47) and much endeared (with straggly beard and all) to all who know him.

In 1941 he wrote an article in the *Angelicum* on the plan of the Apocalypse, with the object of showing that the vision falls into seven parts and that each part again has seven elements. This idea he expanded into a book which now appears in English. Not being a professional exegete (as he says in the introduction), he has followed for the exegesis the commentary of Père Allo, O.P., which appeared in 1921 and is of course the last word in scholarship on this book of the Bible. Père Loenertz's own contribution is principally his theory of the plan.

It is obvious that almost every author will have his own slightly different division of so difficult a book as the Apocalypse. Evident landmarks are the Seven Letters, the Seven Seals, the Seven Trumpets and the Seven Vials. In the other parts we are on more disputed ground. Père Allo had his own divisions. Père Loenertz sees three more septenaries. Père Allo wrote to him before he died in 1945. *à propos* of his 1941 article: 'You press much further than I the use of septenaries. It is a system that must certainly be taken into serious consideration' (quoted in the introduction).

But the theory of the 7 x 7 plan of the Apocalypse is not new. Père Loenertz discovered just before publication that it had been proposed in 1924 by Père Jean Levie, S.J., of Louvain. What is not mentioned is that a 7 x 7 plan is the basis of the work of Fr Francis Gigot, of New York, in the Westminster Version, which appeared in 1915 and is well known to English students. (It was re-edited in the four-volume edition of the Westminster Version in 1931. A further edition of the whole New Testament in one volume is at present being prepared by Fr Lattey.)

The distinction of the seven stages in the non-obvious septenaries (the mysterious signs beginning in c. 12, the vision of Babylon beginning in c. 17, and the visions of the end beginning in c. 19) has to remain a *placitum exegetarum*. I personally have long felt convinced by Fr Gigot's idea that they really are septenaries, and Père Loenertz's divisions are very similar, with the peculiarity, however, that his seventh stage in each septenary is no more than the opening of the next septenary.

In the Westminster Version Fr Gigot divided his text according to his own plan. In this book Fr Hilary Carpenter has provided the Rheims-Challoner text divided (with particular clarity) according to Père Loenertz's plan. Moreover it is a good thing to have some of Père Allo's comments here reproduced, albeit in a mere sketch. For that great book is perhaps too erudite for some readers—although an abridged edition appeared in 1930—but it is anyway nowadays, alas, to most people inaccessible. SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

THE REAL SOVIET RUSSIA. By David Dallin. (Hollis and Carter; 18s.)

Napoleon on St Helena prophesied that all Europe would in a century be 'either Cossack or Republican'. It was a shrewd, if insufficient, forecast; for the U.S.S.R. represents today a fascinating combination. Much of Marxism is a development of the philosophy of the French Revolution; much is a development of the philosophy of the Manchester school; much, and, in particular, the tradition of government, comes from the Moscow of the Tsars. In so far as 'Republicanism' can be equated with that belief in the autonomy and perfectibility of man which was the basis of continental liberalism in the nineteenth century, the 'Cossacks' and the 'Republicans' have joined hands. In so far as Liberalism is based on the Christian doctrine, however diluted, of the nature of man, the two are in opposition. Hence the contemporary crisis of English Liberalism, a crisis admirably illustrated today in the *Manchester Guardian* or the *New Statesman*. The true indigenous Liberalism of the English has a more reputable origin than Rousseau. Its roots lie in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and that 'good old cause' for which 'Hampden perished on the field and Sidney on the scaffold'.

All this should be borne in mind when reading Dr Dallin's book, which is a more satisfactory achievement than the ridiculous 'blurb' on the dust-cover might lead one to suppose. Some of the points are admirable. In particular he emphasises that in Russia the intelligentsia has become a new class, and he is interested to explain what that new class wants. He believes that it dislikes the arbitrary régime of the police-state, and would prefer the Western concept of the rule of law. If this is so, it is an interesting example of the way a traditional pattern reasserts itself after a revolution, for it was precisely the arbitrary nature of so much of the Tsarist administration which alienated the intellectuals of Russia during the nineteenth century. The present intelligentsia, says Dr Dallin, accepts the present state economy as *de facto*, and it maintains the traditional Russian dislike of foreigners, a dislike which makes the Comintern by no means a popular institution. Above all the intelligentsia wants peace and quiet and reasonable security. Dr Dallin suggests that ultimately the success or failure of the regime will depend on its ability to satisfy this class which, he maintains, is far more politically significant than the peasantry. The peasants will not initiate any future change. The tightening up of the Kolkhoz system and the