

Cardinal Pie – I

June 28, 2014

Cardinal Pie (1815–1880) was a great churchman of 19th century France, one of the great defenders of the Faith against that liberalism which was eating up the world from the French Revolution (1789) onwards. Pope Pius X kept his works by his bedside and read them constantly. No doubt the Cardinal's profound grasp of the key ideas driving the modern world played a major part in enabling Pius X to obtain a 50-year reprieve, say from 1907 to 1958, for the doomed Catholic Church.

Doomed? But the Catholic Church cannot be doomed! True, by God's protection it will last to the end of the world (Mt. XXVIII, 20), but at the same time by God's Word we know that by then the Faith will scarcely be found on earth (Lk. XVIII, 8), and that it will have been given to the forces of evil to defeat the Saints (Apoc. XIII, 7). These are two important quotes to bear in mind in 2014, because everything around us today tells us that the followers of Christ must be prepared for one seeming defeat after another, e.g. the fall of the Society of St Pius X. Here is what Cardinal Pie had to say on the matter, some 150 years ago:–

“Let us fight, hoping against hope itself, which is what I wish to tell faint-hearted Christians, slaves to popularity, worshippers of success and shaken by the least advance of evil. Given how they feel, please God they will be spared the agonies of the world's final trial. Is that trial close or is it still far off? Nobody knows, and I will not dare to make a guess. But one thing is certain, namely that the closer we come to the end of the world, the more and more it is wicked and deceitful men who will gain the upper hand. The Faith will hardly be found on earth, meaning that it will almost have disappeared from earthly institutions. Believers themselves

will hardly dare to profess their belief in public, or in society.

“The splitting, separating and divorcing of States from God which was for St Paul a sign foretelling the end, will advance day by day. **The Church, while remaining always a visible society, will be reduced more and more to dimensions of the individual and the home.** When she started out she said she was being shut in, and she called for more room to breathe, but as she approaches her end on earth, so she will have to fight a rearguard action every inch of the way, being surrounded and hemmed in on all sides. The more widely she spread out in previous ages, the greater the effort will now be made to cut her down to size. Finally the Church will undergo what looks like a veritable defeat, and the Beast will be given to make war on the Saints and to overwhelm them. The insolence of evil will be at its peak.”

These are prophetic words, coming truer by the day, not at all pleasant to admit, but anchored in Scripture. A wise Anglican Bishop (Butler) said in the 18th century, “Things are what they are. Their consequences will be what they will be. Why then should we seek to deceive ourselves?” Notice especially how the Cardinal foresees the impossibility of defending the Faith on any larger scale than just the home. Not everybody agrees that we have already reached that point in 2014. I might wish they were right, but I have yet to be persuaded that with disintegrated people one can make an integrated society. Contrast with us democratic citizens of today the Roman centurion in the Gospel who understood a chain of command and recognized naturally the authority of Our Lord (Mt. VIII, 5–18) – how Our Lord praised him!

Patience. See next week how the Cardinal himself reacted to what he foresaw. He was no defeatist!

Kyrie eleison.