

Catholic Protestant Tensions 1879

- Methodist Bishop rants about a war between Catholics and Protestants

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Bishop Haven's Religious War.

The northern Methodist, Bishop Gil Haven, predicts another war—a religious conflict in which protestantism will undertake to root out catholicism, and in which persecution, hate, and all uncharitableness, will take the place of that apocrophal era of brotherly love and good will of which we have heard, but never seen a great deal. It will be noted that the bishop is a peculiar personage. He is a friend of Grant—is half puritan and half politician, who thinks himself and his church the salt of the earth, and that people who are unable to believe as he does, are unworthy to live. Such, in brief, is the outline of the remarkable character of Bishop Haven, the modern Peter of the new religious crusade—a sort of religious mountebank, who oscillates like the pendulum of a clock between the pulpit and the rostrum. It is a great fault in American society that these kind of people are possible. Bathed to their lips in black republicanism, they make negro worship an instinct, and intolerance a principle. Naturally enough they hate the Catholic church, not on account of its religion, but for its democracy. To them it is a scarlet woman, incarnadined with the politics they hate. If sifted down through the shallow stream of garrulity with which the Bishop babbled of the new religious war, the thread of fact on which he based his propositions, would show this sentiment, and probably nothing else. It is the out cropping of that old primitive lesson of unrighteousness, which would fetter the conscience as it would shackle the intellect, and render both subservient to the chatter of a

canting priest. Eaten up with the ambition of notoriety, insensible to the grandeur of the calling they defile—they drag the mantle of religion through the mire of politics—and barter the love of Christ (even in the pulpit) for hate of men. Such are the fanatic hypocrites who sow the seeds of political animosity and religious antagonism from the leaves of an open bible and under the shelter of a temple dedicated to the gospel of love and kindness. It would be better for the people of this country, if such pseudo-religionists as Bishop Gil. Haven had rocks tied round their necks and cast into the sea, together with their Pandora's box of religious wars and sectional politics. They have done more to feed into flame hatred and dislike between the north and south—have made wider the chasm of animosity—than all other classes of people. There is so much of the poison of selfishness, of intolerance, of hate, of boundless fanaticism in Bishop Haven's blood that in the fury of his enthusiasm, he announces himself ready to convulse his country with war and sacrifice men's lives upon the altar his soulless bigotry. The day for such passionate fanaticism has gone by. It may find an applause in an occasional eccentricity of humanity, but the great body of the people—the thinking, intelligent and good of all sects and conditions of religious belief—will repudiate it with scorn and contempt.