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IN our last issue we called attention to the
unwisdom of "religious" papers affecting
to sneer at the Higher Criticism of the Old
Testament writings, and, by the coincidence
that great minds think alike—Dr. Briggs, in his
Monday morning lecture confirmed our posi-
tion on the subject. He pointed out that the
phrase as well as the science is not new but old;
that it has been directed to classical writings for
centuries and is now employed in the analysis
of the religious books of the world with the
approval of all men. The first notable triumph
which it gained was the demonstration by
Bentley that the so-called Epistles of Phalaris
were not genuine. Boyle and "the bees of
Christ Church" in vain sought to overpower
the great scholar by numbers and ridicule.
Truth prevailed, and, while "the bees" are
forgotten, save when an unkind friend resur-
rects some of their names, the figure of Bentley
stands out in all its lustre and proportions,
and no one dreams of questioning his con-
clusions. His opponents had tradition, pos-
sition, numbers, and wit on their side. He had
truth, and he prevailed. We recall, too, the
dignity with which he remarked on the ridicule
that both parties had used in the course of the
controversy,—“I am content that what is the
greatest virtue of his (Boyle's) book should be
counted the greatest fault of mine.” If any of
our readers are curious to learn details con-

cerning this old dispute and others that took
place among celestial minds in former days,
we refer them to "The Calamities and Quarrels
of Authors," by Isaac D'Israeli.

* * *

Dr. Briggs, however, did not tell us what
had been the result of the *Odium Theologicum*
aroused against Bentley, as his reward for
winning the cause of Christianity against
the English Deists of the eighteenth century.
Previous to his time, the very idea of "various
readings" in the New Testament had been
repudiated with horror by those who arrogated
to themselves the title of "Orthodox." The
facts were undoubted, but "so much the worse
for the facts." In 1713, Collins proved the
facts, and made this the basis of an attack on
the trustworthiness of the record. Bentley
answered him and put him to silence. But
just because he admitted the spuriousness of
1 John, 5: 7, he was assailed with virulence and
denounced as a Unitarian. These attacks pre-
vented him from attempting a critical edition
of the N. T. text, and that was left for Germany
to do. The clamour raised against Bentley
killed Biblical Criticism in the rich Universities
of England for more than a century. It is
wise to remember this, and at the same time
to cry "absit omen."

* * *

When even the political wiseacres—those
infallible persons who know just how any par-
ticular campaign is going—were utterly unable
to gauge the feeling of the people in the recent
electoral contest in this city, so that Mr.
Harty's probable majority was placed at less
than fifty by those who thought themselves
most knowing on such matters, the tyro in
political affairs may be pardoned for feeling
not a little hesitation in attempting to estimate
the significance of such a political landslide.

We think, however, that the result proves
three things, all of them encouraging to those
who hope for the freedom of democratic insti-
tutions from the influences that at present
vitiates them. In the first place a direct blow