

in such a position as Mr. Beecher, that would "court inquiry" as long as it was thought possible to prevent the scandal from being made public? It is very easy to say *now* what Mr. Beecher and his friends should have done three years ago; but even an innocent man does not much relish the thought of such a *fama* going abroad, all through the land, regarding him. "Put yourself in his place."

Besides, Congregationalists hold, as we presume Presbyterians do, that the first step to take in such cases, according to Matt. xviii. 15, 16, is to deal with the alleged offender personally and privately; then in company with one or two more; and after that, if no satisfaction be obtained, the third and final step is to "tell it to the church," which we hold to be the individual congregation of believers. But even on the Presbyterian theory, such a case cannot reach the Assembly, or even the Synod, without having passed through the inferior courts first. To have "called a Council at the very outset," therefore, would have been a most unwarrantable and unscriptural proceeding. Where, then, is the "fatal defect" of which our contemporary speaks? There has been, undoubtedly, criminal neglect of duty on the part of Mr. Bowen, or somebody else, in not taking proper steps to bring the case before the Church; but until that was done, no Council could be held, and that it was not done is no more chargeable to Congregationalism than it is to the Brooklyn Presbytery.

But really, do our Presbyterian brethren rush matters through their courts at such speed that "delay" in a

case like that of Mr. Beecher is impossible? If so, we are only more thankful than ever that we are not a Presbyterian. We are under the impression, however, that it is not always "smooth sailing" even under Presbyterian rule. We need not cite illustrations.

The insinuation that the Brooklyn Council was "packed for a certain purpose," is sufficiently met by the fact that it was not called for the purpose our neighbour seems to suppose. It was not called to try Mr. Beecher, much less to acquit him without proper trial, but to advise Plymouth Church as to the course it should pursue in its very difficult circumstances. It did so, and Mr. Bowen or any one else has sixty days in which to formulate his charges and bring forward his evidence. When he does so, a most unexceptionable and impartial tribunal has been provided before which he can be heard. To sneer, therefore, at "advice," as the *Presbyterian* does, and tell us that advice "is not what is wanted," but a "judgment that will settle the matter for ever," has much more of sound than of sense in it.

As to the result of the Council, the *Presbyterian* thinks it amounts to this, "that when a pastor is extremely popular with his people, he may do what he likes without incurring the risk of discipline. On the other hand, the opposite is just as likely to occur, that many worthy ministers will be sent to the street to beg because they are not liked by the congregation."

Pretty much, in fact, as it is among the Presbyterians! Though we are bound to say that we don't remember of any "worthy minister" among Con-