

John began to hear more and more from members of his own congregation who either refused to believe the charges against him, or, if not so ready to acquit, none the less refused to desert him now.

All of these things seemed definitely to testify that a wave of reaction was upon its way. They almost gave the man hope. Yet by the end of an hour of calculation, John saw that after all it was a small wave. All People's church had more than eleven hundred members. He had not heard from one fifth of them. Those who had communicated or come to press his hand were very frequently the weak, obscure, and least influential. They were the "riff-raff", as Burbeck would have called them, of the congregation. The pastor did not disesteem their support on this account. Instead he valued it a little more; yet gave himself no illusions as to its value in a battle-line.

At the same time his friends urged him to organize against the assaults of Elder Burbeck; to send out bell-ringing committees upon his own account. Yet he would not do this. He would not make himself an issue. But the minister's negatives were not so strong as they had been. It was one thing to write in a free hand at midnight how bravely he would endure his fate. It was another to wait the creeping hours in passive fortitude until the blow should fall.

By noon he confessed to himself that he was feeling rather broken. For a week he had eaten little, and that little nervously, absently, and without enjoyment. His sleep had been restless and unrefreshing. Strong, vigorous as he was, reckless as were the draughts that could be made upon his work-hardened constitution, a fear that it would fail him now began to agitate the man. He must be strong physically. He must bear himself unyielding as Atlas. His shoulders, instead of sinking, must