

The Good News

Winter 2021/22



North West Northants Pastorate

Time and travels make some things seem long ago and distant.

Here with my flask of tea looking out from my vantage point just outside the village, I can make out the outlines of Borough and Arbury Hills. There, six thousand years ago people began to build and live in forts and settlements.

In the valley below a Roman road and behind me on the ridge, the remains of a Roman settlement; where once Iron was worked more than one and a half thousand years ago.

I see too the peaks and troughs of medieval field systems where five hundred years ago people grew their food.

We live among the works and creations of those that came before us. But they are not left behind, they are not forgotten, they are still here, all around us, part of us.



Image: from Charcoal Gospel by Neil Thorogood © Neil Thorogood/United Reformed Church 2016.

What came into this world, far away, two thousand years ago, is still all around us today; living, breathing, speaking, healing, Holy Spirit, a child is born. Let there be Light!

“In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

(John 1: 4-5 NIV)

Inside this Winter Issue

Brightness, Warmth, Cheer and I Suspect, a Lot of Hindsight

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Deadline for contributions to next
issue: 16th February 2022

**Good News welcomes contribu-
tions from readers**, though publi-
cation is not guaranteed.

By the Grace of God let there be
more to this magazine than the
words that are written.

Editorial

Who's Light is This?

Hello, what's this? This is new...

An editorial; goodness me! Who would have thought? Your editor having something to say? Well yes, I have.

Isn't it amazing that at the darkest time of the year we often find in societies and cultures around the world, the uplifting and encouraging practice of casting light into the world; shining light into the darkness!

Whether it is the simple lighting of a candle, setting ablaze a bonfire or celebrating a grand festival of light! — Secular, religious, cultural or commemorative, we can all think of a good reason to lift our spirits by setting fire to something!

Whether the reason is warmth, light, or a means to cook and share food; it is good news.

But what is this 'Good News', this magazine. What is it for,? Who is it for? Does it shed any light? Should it shed any light?

Or, should it not try to reflect light; a bright and unfaltering light?

Should not this magazine be reflecting, sharing and celebrating the greatest light of all?

The Light of Our Lord Jesus Christ?

Something we would want to share with others?

Should we not be clear about just what the Good News is and let our spirits be lifted by steps we take in sharing this news?

Go on, I dare you to...

Andrew.



Image: from Charcoal Gospel by Neil Thorgood © Neil Thorgood/United Reformed Church 2016.

A Message for All

From Rev. Liz Adams

What does Advent mean to you?

Perhaps it's a time of frenzied activity: presents to buy, wrap and give, cards to exchange, visits to make, school plays to watch, decorations to put up, food to prepare, and so on and so on and so on, all in preparation for the Big Day itself.

Or perhaps it's a time of preparation of a different sort.

A time of reflection to prepare our hearts spiritually to celebrate the wonder of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God-with-Us, born in human form.

For most of us, Advent is a bit of both – and there's no judgment in that. Christmas is a wonderful time for togetherness and celebration with our nearest and dearest – something we especially need this year after the difficulties of the past 18 months.



Image: from Charcoal Gospel by Neil Thorogood © Neil Thorogood/United Reformed Church 2016.

A Message for All cont.

From Rev. Liz Adams

But at church, in the midst of the excitement and busyness, we also make time to prepare our hearts spiritually.

Personally, I find myself pulled in all sorts of directions in Advent – all of them equally as special!

There's the excitement and the much-valued opportunities to spend time with family and friends.

Then there's the spiritual journey through Advent.

But there's also the amazing joy of all the services through December when we welcome many, many people into our church buildings to celebrate the Good News of Jesus Christ, many of whom we may not often see in church, but who nonetheless feel compelled to worship the infant Jesus.

I absolutely love Christmas for this very reason!

We can sometimes assume that those in the world around us are only interested in the consumerist, celebratory aspects of Christmas, when actually Christmas is still a deeply spiritual time for many people in all sorts of ways: for example, donations to charities rises significantly at this time of year.

The Christian message of peace and goodwill is still very powerful, and we have an amazing opportunity to share that message and bring hope to our local communities during our Advent and Christmas services and outreach projects.

[Cont...

A Message for All cont.

From Rev. Liz Adams

The challenge for us as Christians is to hold together the different aspects of Advent, so that our Christmas is truly meaningful, and doesn't lose sight of the 'reason for the season': the hope we have in Jesus Christ, the Word made Flesh, God with Us.

Blessings,

Rev Liz.

The Reverend Liz Adams is Minister of Northampton Pastorate, Castle Hill URC and Doddridge Memorial URC..

Synod has appointed the Rev Liz Adams as the Area Transitional minister for the churches of West Northamptonshire Long Buckby; Kilsby; Crick and Creaton plus Duston from September 2021 to September 2022

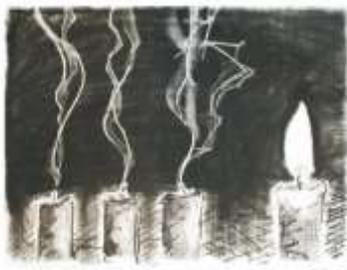


Image: from Charcoal Gospel by Neil Thorogood
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It takes just one remaining Light
To be reflected by the love that is all around us in the world
To see that all is not dark and lost
Reflecting and sparkling from the myriad faces of humanity
Just one Light and a whole rainbow world of colour and diversity shines.

Prayers

From Rev. Michael Bond

For Prayer

This quarter we are asked to remember and pray for:

- Vision for the Elders as they seek the way forward.
- God created the world and said it is very good. How can we help to get it back to being very good.
- Those in countries overseas who need help with so many things
- those locally who need help but don't know who to ask!

Give thanks. Always give thanks for answered prayer.

At least one has had the medication changed with good results.

Another was worried about a problem.

The problem disappeared.

The worry did not solve the problem.

Jesus said do not worry but try to be concerned for others.



Is this true?

People concerned for the weak show their strength. Their strength, is any society's strength. The ultimate power, strength and limit of our civilisation.

If so; think; what are you are going to do about it?

Go on, I dare you to...

Long Buckby News

Coffee Mornings are Back

Hello from Long Buckby everyone!

Our Flower Rota:

December 5th	Gill Best
December 12th	Wendy Baker
December 19th	Andrew Bodsworth
December 26th	No worship
January 2nd	Sian Ellison (1st)
January 9th	Norman Chandler (7th)
January 16th	Sian Ellison 19th
January 23rd	Val Cole
January 30th	Wendy Baker
February 6th	Rita Stowe (Feb)
February 13th	Peggy Bond
February 20th	Diana Babb
February 27th	Yvonne and Andrew Howes



Birthday Wishes to:

December	Len Babb, Harry Ellison
January	Edna Curtis
February	Clive Cooper, Kath Packer, Chris Berry

Hope Centre

Please remember the collection box for the Hope Centre in Northampton. Food, hot chocolate, biscuits, rice puddings. Also, cleaning materials and laundry detergents very welcome.

Coffee mornings

The first Saturday in December for Marie Currie Care and Support

The first Saturday in February for TEAR Fund

Andrew Howes Invites You; Fun, Fish and Chips

Oh! And Beetles (not the Beatles (unfortunately))



Long Buckby URC

Fish and Chip Lunch and Beetle Drive

Saturday 18 December 2021 12.00 – 14.00

£7.50 to include lunch and dessert

There will be a Raffle.

Please contact Andrew Howes to book your place

07814076027

01327705115

Andrewhowes66@gmail.com

Before you ask, yes some beetles do look like ants; like the 'Anthicidae' in fact, sometimes called 'flower beetles'. This particular example, for it is indeed one of these, does seem to like the look of those (disproportionately small) flowers opposite! (Om nom nom nom!)

Creaton News

News from Margaret Anderson

Hello from Creaton everyone!

Our Mission Statement:

Worship God joyfully
Offer Christ faithfully
Promote growth hopefully
Serve others lovingly.

I will try to convey the wonderful spirit of comradeship that pervades our community:

Although there is not a great deal to say about what has been happening at Creaton, we have all really appreciated our fellowship and support during the Lockdown.

Especially valuable has been the allocation of the membership among the Elders; where possible, weekly phone calls were made to keep people in touch with the outside world.

This, together with personal ties of friendship kept our spirits up during the darkest days.

We thank God for His Spirit working through us.

Poppies Coffee Shop is open from 10.00am to 12 noon Wednesday and Friday. Poppies is closed on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Everyone is most welcome to come, and people in the village are very pleased that it is back open.

Notes about our services

A candlelight Service will be held Monday 20th December at 7pm.

Proceeds from our Gift Service on 12th December will go to the Hope Centre.

The Joint Service with St Michael's Parish Church will be to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Margaret.

Kilsby News

News from Val Janes

Hello from Kilsby everyone!

Our Mission statement:

The purpose of this church is to provide a warm welcoming place for all people, of any age, to worship and to learn about faith.

Services are on Sunday mornings at 11am

You can find our list of Services and Preachers in the Preaching Diary.

Community cafe

Every Monday and Thursday at 9am until 12noon everyone is welcome

Scrabble

Every Wednesday at 1pm everyone is welcome

Sewing

Every other Friday at 2pm until 4pm everyone is welcome

Val.

From 'In the Bleak Midwinter' by Christina Rossetti, 1872:

“What can I give him?
Poor as I am?
If I were a Shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can give him,
Give my heart.”

But what can I give Him?
Arts and Crafts, stained glass and shafts of rainbow light.
Rainbows! Orange and red and yellow...

Preaching Diary December 2021 to February 2022

Date	Long Buckby All services at 11am unless otherwise stated	Creaton All services at 11am unless otherwise stated
05/12/21	Clive Leakey	Rev Geoff Townsend
12/12/21	Margaret Hooper	Jon Heard Gift Service
19/12/21	Andrew Howes With Lessons and Carols	Rev Geoff Townsend
25/12/21	-	Rev Anne Jack
26/12/21	No Service Boxing Day	No Service Boxing Day
02/01/22	Rev Craig Muir	Rev Geoff Townsend
09/01/22	Rev Tim Huc	Jon Heard
16/01/22	Jon Heard	Rev Geoff Townsend Joint with Parish Church
23/01/22	Rev Geoff Townsend With Holy Communion	Rev Craig Muir
30/01/22	Rev Liz Adams Pastorate Service Long Buckby	Rev Liz Adams Pastorate Service Long Buckby
06/02/22	Ian Harrison	Rev Geoff Townsend
13/02/22	Clive Leakey	Jon Heard
20/02/22	John Perkins	Rev Geoff Townsend
27/02/22	Rev Michael Bond With Holy Communion	Rev Craig Muir

Preaching Diary December 2021 to February 2022

Date	Crick All services at 11am unless otherwise stated	Kilsby All services at 11am unless otherwise stated
05/12/21	Andrew Howes With Holy Communion	Trevor Boys
12/12/21	Jenny Goodger	Rev Michael Bond With Holy Communion
19/12/21	Frances Thomas	Cecil Gill With Carol Service
25/12/21	09:30 Rev Michael Bond	-
26/12/21	No Service Boxing Day	No Service Boxing Day
02/01/22	David and Pat Biddle	Songs of Praise
09/01/22	Rev Geoff Townsend With Holy Communion	David and Pat Biddle
16/01/22	Ian Mair	Cecil Gill
23/01/22	Bobbie Wakeleigh-Jones	Trevor Boys
30/01/22	Rev Liz Adams Pastorate Service Long Buckby	Rev Liz Adams Pastorate Service Long Buckby
06/02/22	Jon Heard	Songs of Praise
13/02/22	Cecil Gill	Andrew Howes With Holy Communion
20/02/22	Wendy Pittman	Cecil Gill
27/02/22	Trevor Boys	Rev Geoff Townsend

Crick News

News from Jenny Goodger

Hello from Crick everyone!

The purpose of this church is to provide a warm, welcoming place for people of all ages to worship God and to grow in faith.

Chapel Birthdays

Happy birthday wishes to Steve and Louise Wilkin and Jenny Goodger who have birthdays around this time.

Brenda Tomalin

Our church was almost full with invited guests for Brenda Tomalin's memorial service in September.

It was a happy occasion, organised by her children and grandchildren, with several of them taking part. The service was full of music and her favourite hymns, a fitting tribute to a lovely lady.

Coffee Mornings

Coffee mornings are now back as a regular feature on the first Saturday of the month.

Our October morning raised £100 for Cancer research, with nearly £100 in November. 'The regulars' choose charities to support through the year.

Our December morning is traditionally a fundraiser for chapel funds. Come and join us on December 4th .

Lunches

We were pleased be able to reinstate 'chapel lunches' last month, albeit in a simpler form of soup and sandwiches. All our diners were delighted to be back!

Talking of lunches, in case you were wondering from earlier, "Om nom nom nom!" is a happy eating noise, usually made by the Cookie Monster.

Talking of beetles, did you know, at this time of year, some of them disguise themselves as snowmen! Yes they do...

Crick News

Jenny Shares this with Us

Christmas Day

We have, with great regret, decided not to have a carol service this year, but you are welcome to join us on Christmas morning for a service at 9.30am

All of us in Crick wish all of you a peaceful, joyous Christmas and a happy and healthy 2022.

Jenny.

Jenny Shares This with all of Us:

The nights have drawn in, it's getting dark early, days are dull. But lots of houses suddenly become brightly lit, beacons of light in their streets, lanes, communities.

It is difficult to go anywhere without seeing twinkling brightly coloured lights, adorning houses, trees, shops, lampposts. Lights shining brightly in the darkness.

As we reflect on the words at the beginning of John's Gospel we are reminded that the light does shine out in the darkness, lighting up our way and our streets, homes, communities.

That light, which comes from God, is Jesus whose birth we remember at this time of year. As you go around the shops and streets, or visit friends, look at the lights.

Remember that the light of God shines brightly. overcoming the darkness in the world and bringing joy. Jesus, bringer of light to the dark world brings joy, freedom and hope.

Share some of that light this Advent.

No tinsel here, instead treasures of light like rainbows! Red and orange and yellow and green and blue and indigo and violet... and gold; all around.

Worth a look, I think...

The story behind the hymn

How Great Thou Art—Contributed by Norman Chandler

You know the one:

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art ...

In 1885, Carl Boberg, a Swedish editor and future politician, was walking home when a thunderstorm appeared on the horizon. With thunder and lightning all around Boberg ran for shelter.

Later at home with the storm spent he opened the windows to let in some fresh sea air and the vision of tranquillity that greeted him stirred something in his soul.

Thrushes sang, and in the distance church bells sounded. The contrast between the roaring thunderstorm and the now peaceful landscape urged the writing of a poem “O Store Gud”. Translation O Mighty God.

After the poem was published an unknown Swede put “O Store Gud” to the tune of a Swedish folk song. In the late 1800s several versions were published in Swedish.

In the early 1900’s the song was translated into German and a few years later the Russian version appeared. The first English language version was not penned until 1925. However those who know the modern version would be hard pressed to recognise it.

In the early 1930’s Stuart K Hine, an English missionary, first heard the Russian version of “O Store Gud” whilst in the Ukraine. For years he and his wife sang the song with the locals then he decided to translate it into English.

Translation is as much an art as a science and Hine took liberties changing the title to “How Great Though Art”. Hine published the work alongside the Russian version in a magazine called Grace and Peace which was circulated to missionaries.

The story behind the hymn

How Great Thou Art—Contributed by Norman Chandler

A British-American theologian called J Edwin Orr traveling in India heard a Naga choir singing it in English and was most impressed. Orr was an evangelist and was in India to preach not collect music but he brought it back to America and had it performed at a conference for college students where he was speaking.

In the audience were the children of Tim Spencer, a singing cowboy and actor who had found fame singing in a group called Sons of the Pioneers which included Bob Nolan and Roy Rogers.

Spencer owned Mana Magic Inc. a publisher of Christian music and purchasing the rights he published the song.

“How Great Though Art” remained relatively obscure until George Beverly Shea soloist for Billy Graham’s crusades adopted it as his signature song. The rest as they say is history!

Elvis Presley recorded it and won a Grammy and it has been recorded by many other artists including Carrie Underwood who topped the charts in 2011.

I think that we can say that “How Great Though Art” is a world class hymn, with its origins in both Europe, Asia and the new world.

Rejoice and Sing says it is a Russian Hymn; well it can’t give the full history in one line can it!

A prayer of Thanks

Lord I give thanks that in this world of great confusion and strife
We can share amazing works of great meaning and beauty
Lord I give thanks for the people who provide the light that guides us
So that while we journey through the world we can find your love
Lord I give thanks for the hymns that help lift up our thoughts to you
That our love shines for each other and most of all shines for you
Lord I give thanks
Amen

Thinking About the Lectionary

The Seasons of a Church Year

So here we are, a new beginning! Advent and Onwards! From Advent, through Epiphany and onto Transfiguration Sunday.

Listening to, or reading words like these probably doesn't have a lot of meaning for most people; indeed, there are those that would argue that they belong back in 1611. (1611, why 1611? Well you would have to ask King James about that...)



Image: from Charcoal Gospel by Neil Thorogood ©
Neil Thorogood/United Reformed Church 2016.

Advent: the arrival of an important person or thing (see illustration above).

Epiphany: a moment of sudden or great revelation (see illustration above).

Transfiguration: Ahh! Now that's going to take a little longer to explain; maybe if we had a book, a Bible if you will, and a guide, sort of like a Lectionary. Something from which we could read every day...

Go on, I dare you to...

Lectionary Readings

December 2021

Second Sunday of Advent December 5

Malachi 3:1-4

Luke 1:68-79

Philippians 1:3-11

Luke 3:1-6

Third Sunday of Advent December 12

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

Fourth Sunday of Advent December 19

Micah 5:2-5a

Luke 1:46b-55

Hebrews 10:5-10

Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

Christmas Day December 25

Isaiah 9:2-7

Psalm 96

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

First Sunday After Christmas December 26

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26

Psalm 148

Colossians 3:12-17

Luke 2:41-52

Weaving Sacred and Secular December

1st World AIDS Day

3rd International Day of Persons with Disabilities

5th In the bleak midwinter of 1830, Christina Rossetti was born

10th Human Rights Day

Lectionary Readings

January 2022

Epiphany of the Lord

January 2

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

Baptism of the Lord

January 9

Isaiah 43:1-7

Psalm 29

Acts 8:14-17

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Second Sunday after the Epiphany

January 16

Isaiah 62:1-5

Psalm 36:5-10

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

John 2:1-11

Third Sunday after the Epiphany

January 23

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

Psalm 19

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Luke 4:14-21

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

January 30

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Psalm 71:1-6

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Luke 4:21-30

Weaving Sacred and Secular January

2nd Methodist Covenant Sunday

18th—25th Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

25th Burns Night

27th Holocaust Memorial Day

Lectionary Readings

February 2022

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

February 6

Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13)

Psalm 138

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Luke 5:1-11

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

February 13

Jeremiah 17:5-10

Psalm 1

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Luke 6:17-26

Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

February 20

Genesis 45:3-11, 15

Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40

1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

Luke 6:27-38

Transfiguration Sunday

February 27

Exodus 34:29-35

Psalm 99

2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a)

Weaving Sacred and Secular February

1st Chinese New Year

13th Racial Justice Sunday

21st Fairtrade Fortnight Begins

22nd World Thinking Day—now there's a thought

A Late Night Reflection: And The Page Fell Open...

Coming Together, Drifting Apart and Moving On

Here I am, late at night, I pick up the Charcoal Gospel booklet and start to look, the page falls open; It's a camel! Why a man riding a camel? I start to read:

Meditation

You come the long way.

You come from obscurity and return into mystery.

You come without name or number.

But come you do,

from out of the distant east,

crossing the sands to bring your gifts,

following that star.

Then you are gone.

In your wake Bethlehem's children die,
the brooding king exacting the ransom for
your pilgrimage.

In your wake Mary, Joseph and Jesus must flee to Egypt
the family of God made refugees.

In your wake Jesus will grow up in a home in which lie
hidden, but remembered,
gold,
incense,
myrrh.

You bring wonder and terror.

Your gifts that hint at royalty and worship
also suggest the gentle preparation of the dead.

You leave the lingering promises of power and pain,
adoration and abandonment,
love and loss.

You are amongst the first in all the world to come,
with your gifts and with your questions,
in longing and in faith.

(Meditation: from Charcoal Gospel by Neil Thorogood © Neil Thorogood/United Reformed Church 2016.)

And so it was, I experienced [an] epiphany.

(The camel has wandered off to the back page... be quick before it wanders out of the magazine altogether!)

Worth a look, I think...

Some Bible Thoughts and Quotes

Unravelling Acts from Anecdotes

In 1952 **C S Lewis**, in a letter, wrote:

“It is Christ Himself, not the Bible, who is the true Word of God. The Bible, read in the right spirit and with the guidance of good teachers will bring us to Him.”

(C S Lewis, Collected Letters of C S Lewis. Harperone 2005)

What does this tell us about what Lewis thought of the bible? What does it tell us about what he thought about the guidance of good teachers?

Bill Bryson reminds us that in 1650 Bishop Ussher of the Church of Ireland after due study of the bible and other resources calculated that the earth had been created:

“...at midday on the 23rd October 4004 BC, an assertion that has amused historians and text book writers ever since.”

(Bill Bryson, A Short History of Nearly Everything. Penguin Random House 2003)

Bill Bryson himself observes:

“The universe is an amazingly fickle place, and our existence within is a wonder”

(Bill Bryson, A Short History of Nearly Everything. Penguin Random House 2003)

Indeed; thank goodness for the guidance of good teachers. I wonder who I mean by that? Do you know who you are? Are you afraid?

Was this a line in the sand?

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is “‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” ... ”

(Acts 4: 8-12 NIV)

Or was this statement, the very foundation act of Christianity?

Thanks and Afterthoughts

Wandering from Whence we Came, What do the Wise Leave Behind?



Image: from Charcoal Gospel by Neil Thorogood © Neil Thorogood/United Reformed Church 2016.

Many thanks to all Good News contributors; writers, sifters and wranglers of content, proof readers, printers and distributors. All those that collaborate across time and travels, in all sorts of ways to produce and deliver all of the wonderful resources into which we dip and find treasures to share.

Treasures like a rainbow! Sparkly, shiny, iridescent, red and orange and yellow and green and blue and indigo and violet... and gold and frankincense and myrrh...

Most of all, thank You, for reading this. Now share it with someone.

Go on, I dare you to...

From ships of the desert to ships on the ocean, from rainbows to sunsets across South Seas; Somerset Maugham once wrote "...you saw the vast calmness of the Pacific and twenty miles away, airy and unsubstantial like the fabric of a poets fancy, the unimaginable beauty of the island which is called Murea."¹

I know this vision to be true, I once stood there, looking at Murea from Tahiti, it was sunset; I have been many places and seen many things, but I was a fool.

Sitting here at the side of the field with my flask of tea and now a slice of rich fruit cake gazing out at Arbury Hill, as the sun sets, I wonder; who was that fool?

I thank God for all the teachers in the world that are so much wiser and greater in understanding than I. For the guidance of some of them, in more recent times; thank you God.

¹ (The Trembling of a Leaf. Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc. New York 1921)