

Blake's Easter vision

IN 1907, Geoffrey Keynes, a second-year medical student and the self-consciously unbrilliant younger brother of the economist, saw in the window of a Cambridge bookshop two prints which immediately riveted his attention. "The designs were imaginative, yet precise in the technique of their engraving. They were unconventional, yet obviously deeply felt by their inventor. They were not pretty, but had a solemn beauty of their own."

The prints were by William Blake, and Keynes determined to compile the first comprehensive bibliography of his sprawling work as artist, philosopher and poet. His friends considered Blake, and perhaps Keynes too, half-cracked. It took him fourteen years. You can see in our Easter cover this year – a pen and ink watercolour depicting Christ lying naked and flanked by angels, whilst an angel above him removes the stone at the entrance to the sepulchre – the idiosyncratic angle of vision that hooked the younger Keynes. While the gospel writers and the artists who record the scene are preoccupied by the astonishment of Jesus' followers at the sight of the empty tomb,



Blake takes us inside the sepulchre, to the moment the crucified Jesus – almost casually, as if from a short siesta – opens his eyes.

There is another intriguing detail. The stone which the muscular young angel is lifting – with the deft handling of the professional remover – is not a rough boulder but a tidily-cut rectangular tablet of stone. Is Blake hinting that the obstacle between the awakening Jesus and the abundant life that awaits him and those who choose to follow him is a stone on which the law is written?

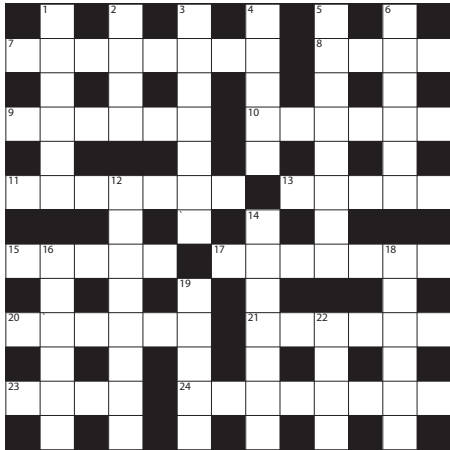
WE HAVE a waiting list of people in prison who would like to read *The Tablet*, and in a year when many of us have had a small taste of enforced incarceration more and more readers have offered to pay for a prisoner's subscription.

"In a strange way we follow the monastic values here – poverty (my wage is £14 per week – I think that counts?), stability (the officers are quite clear and firm about that!), chastity, conversion of manners" a prisoner preparing to celebrate Holy Week and Easter tells us. "Surprisingly, our prayer life flourishes. In my case it has blossomed and makes more sense now than ever before. The starkness of our surroundings is brutal, but God is here, in the faces and eyes, and warmth and generosity of the other inmates. Some of them frighten me at times, but they are all easy to love. In the bleakness and loneliness, a simple word or touch from God is very, very real. Prayers are answered before we have finished saying them. I don't think we get preferential treatment (though we get a good press in the Bible: 'set prisoners free' is a constant cry ...). It is just that we notice these things."

For more details on how to sponsor a subscription to *The Tablet* for a prisoner email Ian Farrar at ifarrar@thetablet.co.uk.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 750 Axe



Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 3 April, *The Tablet*, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY. Email: thetablet@thetablet.co.uk, with Crossword in the subject field. Please include your full name, telephone number and email address, and a mailing address. Three books – on Paul, Theology and Christian Ethics – from the OUP's Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random. **■ We cannot process entries or prizes at present. Please keep entering. Winners will be notified and prizes awarded as soon possible.**

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Across

- 7 One of the seven Persian and Median officers of state (8)
- 8 O.T. desert border town of southern Israel, later a Christian bishopric (4)
- 9 Adoration that may be offered to God alone (6)
- 10 Jerahmeel's other wife, the mother of Onam (6)
- 11 High Priest, the son of Aaron and father of Phinehas (7)
- 13 The "primeval serpent" of Revelation (5)
- 15 Grandson of Noah (5)
- 17 Son and successor to the High Priest Zadok (7)
- 20 River praised for sweeping away Sisera's Canaanite army (6)

- 21 Usurper of the throne of Israel (6)
- 23 Religious observance, e.g. during Lent (4)
- 24 Caretaker of the Ark of the Covenant before its moving to the Temple (8)

Down

- 1 Ancestor of Tobit and the tribe of Naphtali (6)
- 2 Variant spelling for the name of Shem's second son (4)
- 3 Valley where Judah's army defeated the Ammonites and others, and they blessed Yahweh (7)
- 4 Biblical city of the Assyrian empire, now just the ruins at Nimrud in Iran (5)
- 5 David's headquarters during Absalom's rebellion (8)

- 6 Decapolis city, in the region where the miracle of Legion and the swine occurred (6)
- 12 Levite town north of Jerusalem, birthplace of Jeremiah (8)
- 14 Son of Gothoniel, one of the chief men of Bethulia (7)
- 16 Nadab's foster father in a legend told to Tobias to persuade him to leave Nineveh (6)
- 18 Place of religious retreat for Hindus (6)
- 19 Fourth son of Shemida, a Gileadite descendant of Manasseh (5)
- 22 Son of Shem whose name is synonymous with influential tribes and their language in both O.T. and N.T. (4)

SUDOKU | Hard

3	7			4	5	8		2
		9		3			5	6
			2			7		3
8	5				3			
6		3						
				8				4
				2		4		
	9						2	
	8				9	6		1

Each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9.

Solution to the 13 March puzzle

4	6	2	5	8	3	9	1	7
7	9	3	6	1	4	2	5	8
1	5	8	7	9	2	3	4	6
2	7	9	3	5	8	4	6	1
5	8	1	9	4	6	7	2	3
6	3	4	1	2	7	5	8	9
8	1	5	2	3	9	6	7	4
9	4	7	8	6	5	1	3	2
3	2	6	4	7	1	8	9	5

Solution to the 13 March crossword No. 747

- Across:** 1 Abima-Ei; 7 Cain and Abel; 10 Caesarea; 11 Gadi; 13 Adoram; 14 Wraith; 16 Ahio; 17 Mithraea; 19 Anthothijah; 20 Ambrose.
- Down:** 2 Benhadad; 3 Manger; 4 Elam; 5 Macedonians; 6 Ben-abinadab; 8 Achaiah; 9 Bithiah; 12 Brahmins; 15 Sister; 18 Shem.