

Correspondence

Dear Sir,

In the April (1996) issue of 'Science and Christian Belief', Dr Tim Reddish's letter raises a number of interesting questions. For my part, I would want to respond to his querying the divine unknowability of the future by saying that this idea stems from a desire to take the God-given independence of creation and the reality of its temporal history with the utmost seriousness. I do not think that this leads to a diminished notion of the effectiveness of prayer (see my *Science and Providence*, ch. 6). In other writings I have been careful to emphasize the limited nature of a natural theology based on general experience, and my Gifford Lectures, *Science and Christian Belief*, are largely devoted to explaining how a bottom-up thinker can understand God's self-revelation in Christ. Further, though I believe God is involved in the time he has created, I do not for a moment suppose God to be merely temporal or in thrall to time as we creatures are. All divine limitation is gracious self-limitation. Finally, 'a mature invocation of mystery' is as an argument of last resort rather than first resort.

John Polkinghorne, FRS
The President's Lodge
Queen's College
Cambridge
CB3 9ET