4. WILL THE FUTURE BE LIKE THE PAST?
   (The problem of the uniformity of nature)

The vast majority of people believe that tomorrow will be like today. In other words, what is true today will be true tomorrow as well. Just a simple illustration may suffice to explain what is meant by that. As you were walking in the dark last night at your house to get a drink of water, you stubbed your toe on the end of the bed. You winced and let out a little cry of "Ouch!" If you were to do the same thing again tonight, you would expect to say "Ouch!" again, and not "Wow, that's feels good, let me do that again!"

Why is that true? Because we believe that the causal relationships which we learned yesterday will also be the causal relationships we will see today and tomorrow. We believe that the future will be like the past, that those things which we have learned from our experiences and observations, and the causal connections in the past, will hold true in the future.

In fact, this is the whole basis for science and scientific inquiry. The scientist will propose a hypothesis, and then conduct a number of experiments to substantiate what he believes to be true. Those tests are done again and again because he believes, all factors being equal, he should receive the same results each time. The future will be like the past.

The question that then comes to us, Which worldview can account for the uniformity of nature? So let me ask you, Do you believe that the future will be like the past?

If the answer is No, then we really have no further basis for conversation because you have just become entirely irrational. You are using words, but those words are devoid of meaning because they do not mean the same thing in this sentence as they did in the last.

If you answer Yes, then the follow-up question is, Why do you believe that?

One possible answer is, Because it has always been that way. While it is true that it has always been that way, because of your non-Christian worldview, you do not have any right to believe that tomorrow will be like yesterday, or next week like this week, or next month like this month.

While we agree that the future will be like the past, then we say that we are really talking about a Christian view of the world. As a Christian, I believe in a sovereign God who controls all things, who is an orderly God and a good God and has made this world so that we could master it and exercise dominion over it, under Him. God has told us in the Bible that seed time and harvest will follow each other in regular succession.

NKJ Genesis 8:22 "While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease."

God is the God of the seasons. He will keep nature uniform. That is the kind of God we have. That is why I put gas in my car. I do not get up every morning thinking that maybe today my car will run without gas. No, I have found out from experience that if there is no gas in the car, the car will not run. With the Christian view of the world, we do not expect this to be magical or occultic, or that the car will run on some kind of demon force tomorrow. If you do not put gas in your car, it will not run.

However, as an unbeliever, a non-Christian, why do you believe that? With your view of the world, there is no God who controls all of that. On your view, everything happens randomly. It is time, plus chance, plus matter that causes things. On that view, putting gas in my car is like rolling the dice. Maybe it will work this time and maybe it won't. As an unbeliever you do not have any guarantee that it will be that way in the future.
I can imagine the argument coming back. It has always been that way in the past, so I have good reason to believe it will be that way in the future.

Unfortunately, with that kind of answer you are simply begging the question, i.e. you are assuming the answer to the question in your method of answering the question. In other words, you have your answer before you get your answer. You have forgotten that the question has nothing to do with the past. The question has to do with the future. We are not disputing what has been true in the past, or the causal relationships of the past. Now we are asking why will the future be like the past. Why are you counting on it being that way in the future.

The answer, I count on it being that way in the future because it has always been that way in the past is just the question all over again.

Why do you believe that the future will be like the past?

May I suggest it is because you have made a philosophical assumption here about the nature of reality. But it turns out that you have no reason to assume that, given that your view of the world says that we live in a random, chance universe. You are not being consistent with your view of the world.

You might retort: Well, everyone has to believe in the uniformity of nature, that the future will be like the past, or we could not live!

Exactly! We must believe that because this is God's world, He controls it. If we do not live according to the truth in His world, we are not going to get along very well.

So you do know the truth, but you will not admit it. I am afraid you really are guilty before God. You live in His world, and enjoy the regularity of it but do not give thanks to Him for it, nor honor Him with your allegiance.