



# EXPOSITION

Monthly e-Bulletin from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary



## *From My Window*

David Hume (1711–1776) was a Scottish philosopher who was both brilliant and profane, and his naturalistic views were core to Darwin's theory of evolution. The story is told of a visit Hume made to an evangelical friend one evening. After their time together, Hume rose to leave, commented he did not need a light to show him the way out the door, and then said to his friend with a smile, "Pray, do not trouble yourself, sir; I find the light of nature always sufficient." However, when he reached the outside stairs he stumbled in the darkness and fell into the street. His friend heard the noise and ran to him. When he saw that Hume was fine, he gently whispered into his ear, "You really do need light from above, Mr. Hume!" This story causes my mind to ponder Jesus' sad words about humanity: "Light has come to this world, but men love the darkness rather than the light."



This is the **25<sup>th</sup> year** of our ministry, and **VBTS** has never had such an outstanding, dedicated, godly faculty and staff as we have today. Thank you for your prayers on our behalf!

Back (left to right)

Dr. Roger DePriest – Faculty Associate in Biblical Counseling

Mr. Edward Estes – Registrar; Director of Admissions

Dr. Mark Hassler – Associate Professor of Old Testament

Dr. Eric Lehner – Academic Dean; Professor of Theology

Dr. Michael Windsor – Professor of Church History; Librarian

Dr. Thomas Dailey – Professor of New Testament

Front (left to right)

Mrs. Susann DePriest – Assistant to the Librarian

Dr. Brent Belford – Pastor of CBC; Faculty Associate in N.T.

Dr. Daniel Davey – President; Professor of Bible Exposition

Mrs. Gloria Schrader – Administrative Assistant

\*Not pictured: Capt. Tony Brazas (ret.), CFO; Mr. Joel Dailey, Office



## Truth for the Agora: What is God? (April 14, 1648, W.S.C.)

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**“What is God?”** This is question four of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, a 1648 document of 107 theological questions and answers. The incredible response given to this fourth inquiry makes me stand in reverential awe of our great God—“God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.” It has been recorded that when Presbyterian theologian Charles Hodge read those eighteen words, he said, “This is probably the best definition of God ever penned by man” (Packer, *Knowing God*, p. 16). In this brief reflection upon the doctrine of God, let’s take a look at the first four complex terms used by these English and Scottish thinkers to define God’s Being. In so doing, I pray God will be “exalted above the heavens” in our hearts.

**God is a Spirit.** Jesus makes this very declaration in John 4:24: “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.” Being spirit means that the constitution of God is immaterial, invisible, and indestructible. Immediately we are faced with the reality that the spirit-God cannot be known by human sensory perception; we cannot see or touch him. This is what makes Jesus—the *living Word*—so important to us; for “no one has ever seen God, but God the only Son who is at the Father’s side, has made him known” (Jn. 1:18). In addition, the *written Word* becomes invaluable for “these are they that bear witness” of Christ (Jn. 5:39). Meeting the *living Word* through the *written Word* is the only way believers may know and understand the spirit-God in a personal and saving way (Jn. 17:3).

**God is infinite.** In essence, this means that God operates without the boundaries of time and space. Whether we consider his knowledge (omniscience), his power (omnipotence), or his whereabouts (omnipresence), God transcends the boundaries of the created order. Such a God, however, brings great joy to our hearts. *Wherever* I go, he is there (Ps. 139); *whatever* I need, he is able to provide (Matt. 6:8); and *whenever* I am confused, he knows what is perfect for me (1 Jn. 3:19-20).

**God is eternal.** In the book of Revelation, God declares, “I am the Alpha and Omega... the One having been, the One being, and the One coming” (Rev. 1:8). As one commentator well said, the first half of the verse reveals God to be “the absolute beginning and end of human history,” and the last half asserts he is “the eternal God who is unaffected by the events of history.” Moses found great comfort for his soul in these thoughts—as should we—and he wrote, “The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are his everlasting arms” (Deut. 33:27).

**God is unchangeable.** Among many other things that could be stated, this means God has permanent self-identity. In other words, God not only remains who he has been and will be throughout eternity, but *he never forgets he is God!* This is clearly stated in Malachi 3:6, “I the LORD do not change; therefore, you, O children of Jacob are not consumed.” The immutable God always keeps his promises—he never neglects or ceases to remember. Even though Israel of old, or we today, may at times forget our call to obedience, God never forgets his promises. He *will* care for his own.

**Though more could be said—much more,** this is enough to cause our hearts to rejoice *today* in the nature of our great God. I conclude with the words of twenty-year-old Charles Spurgeon on January 7, 1855: “No subject of contemplation will tend more to humble the mind than the thoughts of God. . . . It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity” (Packer, *Knowing God*, p. 13). Spurgeon’s words are just as applicable for us in 2019: when we properly think upon God, lofty thoughts of ourselves evaporate.