extent that one accepts or rejects Kuyper’s views in these areas, to that extent one is moving beyond (legitimately or illegitimately) Calvin himself.

Specifically, at least three legitimate questions can be posed with regard to Kuyper’s neo-Calvinism as Bolt presents it: (1) Is Kuyper’s view of God’s kingdom a good and necessary consequence of Calvin’s view? (2) Is Kuyper’s view of liberty, and liberty of conscience, in line with Calvin’s own emphasis? and (3) How would Kuyper reconcile Calvin’s Geneva with his own public theology?

These questions are not easily answered. Even if answered they still leave open the more important question of the relationship of Scripture and its teaching to public theology. They do, however, it seems to me, reflect at least some of the major contours of neo-Calvinism and would be topics worthy of another volume (or two or three).

Because Bolt gives us Kuyper the political poet, those looking specifically for propositions and principles of statecraft might be disappointed. On the other hand, it is refreshing to see the development of a Christian public theology that has at its core the necessity of persuasion over coercion. That message itself could be the most valuable of the book.

Bolt’s book is an informative, scholarly, insightful and provocative study. He has served the Reformed community, and the Christian church generally, well in offering such substantial and thorough suggestions for an evangelical public theology. Debates and discussions of the relationship of church and state will now need to include Bolt’s analysis and commendation of Kuyper to the American experiment.

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William Craig has attempted to set out a philosophically respectable position with respect to the concept of eternity and time. There are few more qualified than Craig to undertake such a task, and there is likely no other book available on this topic that is both sparing in technical vocabulary and concepts, thus more widely available, and philosophically sophisticated at the same time. The nonpareil accessibility of a book devoted to such a difficult subject will, therefore, likely broaden its circulation among philosophers and non-specialists alike.

As Craig attempts to work through the difficulties, not only of just what time is, but also of how it relates to eternity, the conclusion of his discussion is this: God is timeless without (we could say “before” but that is a time-conditioned word) creation and, abandoning timelessness, temporal since creation. The assumption on which that conclusion rests is a dynamic theory of time.

Craig begins by attempting to articulate the position of those who would hold to divine timelessness because of its entailment with the simplicity or immutability of God. Craig argues that divine simplicity and immutability find no support in Scripture. Not
only so, according to Craig, but simplicity and immutability are even less plausible than any notion of timelessness, so it is folly to attempt to ground the latter in the former. This dismissal or suspicion of the notions of simplicity and immutability in God is, as a matter of fact, exactly of the kind of problems that plague Christianity when philosophers attempt to do theology, the kind of problems that those who were required to study philosophy brought to Christian theology. The impetus behind the notions of simplicity and immutability, theologically, is to safeguard the Scriptural truth that God is not essentially and independently affected by something other than Himself. That is to say, who God is, as eternal, independent, existing, etc., is determined only by God Himself. There are no properties or situations that serve to make God something that He would not otherwise essentially be. While it can be granted that certain notions of simplicity and immutability obtained an abstractness not consistent with the biblical picture of God, that problem is not, first of all, due to misguided theology, but rather to the attempt of philosophy to define theology's parameters.

Craig moves to an exposition of the special theory of relativity (STR), formulated by Einstein in 1905, and his general theory of relativity (GTR), completed in 1915. It is Craig’s conviction that “any adequate theory of God’s relationship to time must . . . take account of what these theories have to say about the nature of time” (p. 32). It turns out, however, that relativity theories are all founded on a false epistemological basis, i.e., that of empiricism, and thus provide no compelling reason for acceptance (p. 66).

One promising argument for divine timelessness that Craig mentions, but eventually dismisses, is the argument from the incompleteness of temporal life. The argument depends primarily on the following premise for its cogency: Temporal existence is a less perfect mode of existence than timeless existence. Given that God, as the maximally perfect being, could not be maximally perfect if he experienced temporal loss, this argument rests, according to Craig, “on very powerful intuition” (p. 67). Those intuitions, however, are not sufficient to sustain the premise, says Craig, since “timeless life may not be the most perfect mode of existence of a perfect person” (p. 73). That is, it may be the case that the experience of temporal succession adds to rather than subtracts from a person such that to experience this succession may not be a defect.

With respect to divine temporality (chapter three), Craig discusses the notion that God could not be timeless because he is personal. It is impossible for a person not to experience at least some kind of succession of moments. Is it possible for a personal God to stand in some kind of relationship to the world and remain timeless? Here we will quote Craig at length since the substance of his response to this question will form the foundation for some concerns below.

It is very difficult to see how He can. Imagine once more God existing changelessly alone without creation, but with a changeless determination of His will to create a temporal world with a beginning. Since God is omnipotent, His will is done, and a temporal world comes into existence. Now this presents us with a dilemma. Either God existed prior to creation or He did not. Suppose He did. In that case, God is temporal, not timeless, since to exist prior to some event is to be in time. Suppose, then, that God did not exist prior to creation. In that case, without creation, He exists timelessly, since He obviously did not come into being along with the world at the moment of creation.
This second alternative presents us with a new dilemma. Once time begins at the moment of creation, either God becomes temporal in virtue of His real relation to the temporal world or else He exists just as timelessly with creation as He does without it. If we choose the first alternative, then, once again, God is temporal. But what about the second alternative? Can God remain untouched by the world’s temporality? It seems not. For at the first moment of time, God stands in a new relation in which He did not stand before (since there was no “before”). Even if in creation the world God undergoes no intrinsic change, He at least undergoes an extrinsic change. For at the moment of creation, God comes into the relation of sustaining the universe or, at the very least, of co-existing with the universe, relations in which He did not stand before. Since He is free to refrain from creation, God could have never stood in those relations, had He so willed. But in virtue of His creating a temporal world, God comes into a relation with that world the moment it springs into being. Thus, even if it is not the case that God is temporal prior to His creation of the world, He nonetheless undergoes an extrinsic change at the moment of creation which draws Him into time in virtue of His real relation to the world. So even if God is timeless without creation, His free decision to create a temporal world also constitutes a free decision on His part to exist temporally. (pp. 86-87)

One way to avoid a notion of divine temporality mentioned by Craig is the way of Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas seeks to deny that God stands in any real relation to the world. While creatures are really related to God, God is not really related to creatures (p. 88). This, however, argues Craig, is unintelligible. To say that the world is really related to God, but that God is not really related to the world “is to say that one can have real effects without a real cause” (p. 89).

The substance of his argument is found in chapter four, which is Craig’s discussion of a dynamic conception of time. The best way to think about the difference between a dynamic and a static view of time is in terms of tense. A dynamic time theorist would hold (at least) that (1) it is impossible to eliminate tense from language and (2) tense is a feature of language just because it is a feature of the world itself. Thus, the world is objectively “tensed” and reality, therefore, flows whether we acknowledge it or not. The static time theorist would likely hold that this “flow” of time is an unfortunate metaphor. While language may be tensed, the static time theorist would hold that this tense is relative, and that space-time itself is tenseless; it just is (p. 169). The discussion of a dynamic vs. a static view of time provides the foundation for Craig’s conclusion with respect to time and eternity.

The argument for a dynamic conception of time finds support in two positions—the ineliminability of tense and the argument from our experience of time. The argument from the ineliminability of tense purports to show that tensed facts are not merely a convention of language, they are constitutive of reality itself. Those who would hold to a static view of time have attempted to show that tense can actually be eliminated from language without any loss of meaning. Craig calls this view the “Old Tenseless Theory

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1 It seems that Thomas’s primary concern here is to maintain that God does not essentially change as He relates to the world. If a real relation entails essential change, then God cannot be “really related” to the world, though He is, of course, related to it. Craig might have given Thomas a bit more leeway here. Thanks to John Frame for this insight.

2 Though Craig seems to see Thomas’s notion of divine simplicity as the culprit behind this view, one wonders to what extent Aristotle’s “thought thinking itself” has influenced Aquinas at this point.
of Language" as put forth, for example, by Bertrand Russell. The attempt here was to translate tensed sentences into a tenseless form without loss of meaning (p. 117). This, however, has itself been eliminated and the "New Tenseless Theory of Language" has arisen in its place. Here there would be agreement that tense cannot be eliminated from language, but the New Tenseless Theory would hold that this fact is irrelevant since all one needs are not tenseless statements, but tenseless facts. Without going into the details of the discussion, Craig's rebuttal of this notion, in its earlier and later stages, is simply to note that there seems to be no compelling argument for the notion that the truth conditions of a sentence can be tenseless. D. H. Mellor, one of the main proponents of this view, fails to show, for example, what makes a fact true, not simply what makes it true at a particular time. Thus, Craig thinks there is no cogent arguments against the ineliminability of tense.

Craig goes on to critique "McTaggart's Paradox" which states, simply that time is essentially tensed, but that tense is self-contradictory. The conclusion of McTaggart, according to his own article, is "the unreality of time" (p. 144). That is, he denies that time has an objective reality. McTaggart's primary weakness, according to Craig, was that he was attempting to see reality sub specie aeternitatis and yet to include tense in his description of the world. He cannot have it both ways. Because there exists a different description of reality that holds at each given moment, to attempt to explain reality by assuming that there exists a single, comprehensive description of it is impossible (p. 154). It is impossible in a world of which tense is necessarily a part. So McTaggart's attempt sets up a paradox, one side of which is out of touch with the way the world really is. Thus, McTaggart's Paradox fails as a refutation of dynamic time. Craig goes on to critique the so-called "myth of passage" of time in support of his dynamic view of time.

Craig then explains and critiques the notion of a static view of time in chapter five. His critique can be summarized in the following:

The static time theorist cannot affirm that the world came into being at the first moment of its existence and therefore cannot affirm that God created the world in the full sense of the word "create." It seems to me, therefore, that a static conception of time is theologically unacceptable. A robust doctrine of creation requires a dynamic theory of time. (p. 214)

Finally, and somewhat curiously, Craig devotes the last twenty pages to "God, Time, and Creation." Here Craig notes that tensed facts and temporal becoming are real. According to him, therefore, it follows from God's creative activity and omniscience that, given the existence of a temporal world, God is also temporal. God quite literally exists now (p. 217).

Two brief points must be made with respect to this book. It should be noted that the points of concern have little to do with the substance of the discussion, but rather with the discussion's impetus, its method of approach, including its starting point. First, Craig is resolute that the solution to the problem of the relationship of time to eternity is found in analytic philosophy (p. 11). (One aside: it is interesting that Craig sets time over against a particular attribute of God's without seeming to notice the "apples to oranges" comparison. That is, a distinction must be made in these discussions between a context of existence and an essential attribute of existence. Craig compares one of God's essential attributes, i.e., God's eternity, to a context of existence in creation, i.e., time. This is a bit like attempting to work out the relationship of God's holiness to air pollution.) He insists that an understanding of God's attributes is found, not in the writings of Christian theologians, but of Christian philosophers. Christian theologians are ill-prepared to discuss matters of such "depth," according to Craig, because they are ill-trained for such. He
notes that, contrary to the present situation, in the Middle Ages "students were not allowed to study theology until they had mastered all the other disciplines at the university" (p. 11).

Craig's understanding of where or with whom to begin a discussion of this sort is unfortunate. For it is exactly in the discipline of theology that this kind of discussion needs first to be addressed. Craig's method of approach, it seems to me, taken to its logical conclusion, can serve and has served historically, to undermine the heart and soul of the Christian faith. Of course, Craig's view of this kind of Archimedean point has been asserted in the history of Christian thought. There have been schools of thought in the Christian tradition that have held views identical or similar to Craig's. Prior to our own country's founding it was thought that what theology needed was a heavy dose of reason's influence in order to rid itself of notorious theological absurdities such as original sin, Trinity and divine incarnation. The way to rid ourselves of such pernicious doctrines is not by a review of God's revelation, but by looking to our own reasonable disciplines to solve the problem. Craig's argument is another piece of natural theology with another now familiar conclusion such that aspects of the created world are assigned also to God.

The point, however, is that, while Craig notes the Middle Ages as an exemplary time for doing theology, he neglects to mention the monumentally crucial point that the Middle Ages demanded a Reformation, and the theology coming from that Reformation was designed to subvert the very methodology that Craig wants to praise. This method of philosophy's right to dictate theology's conclusions, contra the Reformed tradition, is a reassertion of the usus magisterialis rationis that has, in certain key times and places, driven orthodox Christianity eventually to a point where it becomes utterly opposed to its initial tenets.

To his credit, Craig does consult Scripture in various places through the book. It is most unfortunate, however, that in this approach (and like discussions concerning God) the tradition of theology, and more importantly its source (i.e., Scripture), seems to be, at best, tangential to the discussion and the supposedly newer and more adequate method (philosophy) is set forth as coming to the rescue of both reason and theology. For all of its erudition, the method employed in this discussion, if adopted consistently, will lead readers beyond open theism (which Craig wants, for now, to reject) to something much worse.3

Secondly, there is a small hint, though inadvertent, toward a better way to think of God's relationship (in all of His attributes) to His creation. In the lengthy quote above, Craig is wrestling with the notion of God's relationship to creation. He concludes, remember, with the following: "So even if God is timeless without creation, His free decision to create a temporal world also constitutes a free decision on His part to exist temporally." That is, God's free decision to create entailed a further free decision on His part to abandon timeless existence altogether and to become temporal. This conclusion, however, does not follow, particularly given the historic creeds of the Christian faith. What is needed in this discussion is not more philosophy, but more systematic and biblical theology.

Toward the end of the book, Craig rightly notes, "Like the incarnation, the creation of the world is an act of condescension on God's part for the sake of His creatures." He goes on to conclude, however, that God's "timeless, free decision to create a temporal

world with a beginning is a decision on God’s part to abandon timelessness and to take on a temporal mode of existence” (p. 241). Perhaps at this point Craig would have been better served by letting the theologians speak.

The Scriptures are replete with examples of God relating to His creation, and more specifically to His creatures made in His image. How do we go about understanding these examples? The best way to understand these examples is guided by the way in which we understand revelation generally, i.e., as God’s infallible redemptive-historical record of His covenant with His creation. In this way, the examples of God relating to His creatures and to His creation are to be interpreted in the light of God’s climactic example of relating to His creation in the Incarnation of the Son of God. Or to use philosophical jargon, examples of God relating to His creation in Scripture, including God’s relationship to time, must be seen as different “tokens” of God’s condescension, of which the incarnation of the Son of God is the (only) “type.” That is to say, in God’s redemptive-historical economy, all revelations preceding and proceeding from the Incarnation of the Son of God are meant to be seen in the light of God’s covenanting with His creatures in and through that Incarnate Word, His Son. We understand who God is, primarily and preeminently, in His Son. Everything else we understand about God flows from that primary, climactic revelation.

With respect to the relationship of God, as eternal (and infinite, and holy, and unchangeable, and etc., etc.) to His creation, including time, we look first to the Incarnation of the Son of God. The incarnation has never been seen as God’s abandoning of any of His essential attributes at all. As a matter of fact, it is in the incarnation that we begin to see how it is that God can relate to His creation, including time, without becoming less than God. Theology has traditionally affirmed that the Son of God, as God, is to be “acknowledged in two natures inconfusedly (ασυγχύτως), unchangeably (αρέπτως), indivisibly (αδιαιρέτως), and inseparably (αχωρίστως)” (Chalcedonian Creed). On this the great creeds of the church have agreed. Craig’s “solution” to the relationship of (only?) one of God’s essential attributes to His creation is a kind of theistic Eutychianism in which the nature of God, at the point of creation, becomes changed and consequently confused with the nature of His creation.

However, since it is the case that we can know God only as He has revealed Himself, and since the climax of God’s revelation and relationship to us is in His Incarnate Son, our knowledge of God’s relationship to His creation must be mediated through that climactic revelation of God in Christ. God, the Triune God, can indeed, given the incarnation of God Himself (in the second Person of the Trinity) exist temporally, while at the same time, existing eternally as God. The incarnation teaches us that such things are not only possible with God, but are a substantial part of our reason to worship Him. In the words of Exod 3, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is and remains as well the “I Am.”

I fear that these kinds of discussions, left unchecked by Scriptural/Reformed theology, will move toward a denial of the biblical view of the Incarnation itself. There seems to be no intellectual step to be taken, once God’s essential attributes are thought to be altered in this way, to denying the biblical doctrine of the deity of the Son of God as

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4 It is worth noting in Exod 3 that the reason God appeared in a bush that would not burn was to illustrate both that God, as represented by the fire, is with us, but is also nevertheless not in any way dependent on that which He has created. The fire burns without need of the bush to fuel it. Thus, the unburning bush illustrates the asuity of the covenant God, and Moses falls down to worship.
well. Only as Christian philosophers begin more carefully to listen to Christian theologians will their conclusions move toward real help, intellectually and otherwise, for the communities they wish to serve.

I shall only say, that those who are inconversant with these objects of faith—whose minds are not delighted in the admiration of, and acquiescence in, things incomprehensible, such as is this constitution of the person of Christ—who would reduce all things to the measure of their own understandings, or else wilfully live in the neglect of what they cannot comprehend—do not much prepare themselves for that vision of these things in glory, wherein our blessedness doth consist.5

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For all those who have an interest in the tradition of Dutch Reformed theology in North America, this book provides interesting, if on occasion somewhat sad, reading. Written as a history of the PRC which focuses particularly on its doctrinal distinctives, it offers valuable insights not only into what the PRC believes but why it believes through focusing on the two defining controversies of the church's first seventy-five years: the common grace crisis of the 1924 synod of the Christian Reformed Church and the conflict of the late forties and early fifties with the Schilderites of the Liberated Churches. For those in the Westminster constituency, there is also some treatment of the Clark–Van Til controversy, upon which Herman Hoeksema commented at some length and in which he decidedly favored Clark.

Written by a second-generation PR minister who knew many of the personalities involved in the events he describes, Hanko has a sensitivity and an understanding of the issues and events which only an insider can possess. On the whole, history has not been kind to Hoeksema and his followers, and many of their legitimate concerns have disappeared from debate not because they are not legitimate but because they have been made to look ridiculous through the unfair caricaturing of exactly what was at stake, particularly in 1924. The world can cope with a more sympathetic reading of the PRC, and this book provides just that.

Nevertheless, the book's strength is also its weakness: Hanko's very closeness to these things limits his ability to sympathize with those who "lost"—and this is most definitely a history of "winners" (the PRC) and "losers" (the CRC; those who were influenced by the covenant teaching of Klaas Schilder). Clearly, part of the purpose of the work is to remind the rising generation of PR ministers and church members who are now distanced by at least one generation from the defining controversies, of what issues were at stake and why the battles were fought in the way in which they were. Whether it will fulfil this purpose, and what the future PRC will look like is a matter for speculation; but I

5 John Owen, The Works of John Owen (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977), 1:52. I am indebted to John Frame for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this review.
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