

deeper into Anglicanism, and priests and other Anglicans who want a substantial aid to help them explain Anglicanism to their friends and families.

While more depth is needed in certain areas (such as Anglican history), it is admirable how much depth McDermott conveys in one very readable, 350-page book.

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Thomas M. Ward, *After Stoicism: Last Words of the Last Roman Philosopher*.

Word on Fire Academic, 2024. ISBN: 978-1-68578-133-0, xi+201pp., hbk \$35, also Kindle.

We are witnessing a revival of interest in Stoicism which is evident in academic publications, popular YouTube videos, and TikTok videos. Its influence is ubiquitous. While Stoic philosophy offers much that the Christian can commend, it ultimately requires “baptism” to align with a Christian worldview. Fortunately, Thomas M. Ward, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Baylor University, has written an accessible introduction to one of the most significant historical dialogues between Christianity and Stoicism: Boethius’s *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Ward’s book will be invaluable for pastors and parishioners encountering Stoicism’s resurgence in books and social media.

Ward’s study of Boethius combines commentary, cultural engagement, and personal reflection. His analysis provides all the context necessary for readers new to *The Consolation* to grasp its meanings within its historical framework. Drawing on Boethius as a foundation, Ward frequently connects his insights to modern thinkers and cultural artifacts that readers from diverse backgrounds will readily recognize. What sets this book apart is Ward’s warm, conversational tone, which weaves his personality and experiences into the text, creating the sense of a genuine dialogue between the reader, Ward, and Boethius.

The greatest strength of *After Stoicism* lies in Ward’s insightful analysis of Boethius’s engagement with the Greek philosophical tradition. Instead of merely tracing Boethius’s intellectual heritage, Ward highlights how Boethius both affirmed and corrected these ancient ideas from a Christian perspective. For example, in the chapter “Goods of Fortune,” Ward demonstrates how the Greek philosophical tradition and Christianity both converge and diverge in

Boethius on the issue of detachment. The Stoics insisted that the person must strive for *apatheia*—total detachment—so that one suppresses even one’s affection for one’s own family. While detachment has a Christian corollary (Luke 9:23–25; Col. 3:2; 1 John 2:15–17), Boethius emphasizes an openness to other people that corrects the Stoic tendency because in those relationships, a person becomes more fully human (62–65).

Another instance of the convergence-divergence dynamic between Greek philosophy and Christianity occurs in Ward’s discussion of freedom in the book’s final chapter. The Stoics emphasized the role of fate and affirmed determinism to preclude what Ward calls “the freedom of *action*”—the freedom to do what one wants. Instead, the Stoics emphasized “the freedom of *reaction*”—the human ability to respond to what has happened with virtue. The freedom of reaction is capacious, increasing through the acquisition of virtue and decreasing through the acquisition of vice. Ward argues that for Boethius, this is a distinction without a difference. In Boethius’s Christian anthropology, there is no freedom of reaction separated from freedom of action so that they stand alone. Freedom of action is the ground for the freedom of reaction. For humans to be moral agents, Ward insists that there must be a freedom of choice that orders the world. At the same time, the Christian thinker can affirm that some people are freer than others based on their how virtuous they are (167–77). In his treatments of detachment and freedom, Ward’s nuanced approach not only deepens our understanding of *The Consolation* but also provides a compelling framework for modern Christians to thoughtfully and critically engage with neo-Stoicism.

Ward’s pastoral intention to reach a broad audience is commendable, though scholars may find his contextual analysis overly basic. This is a minor drawback; Ward’s accessible historical survey allows the book’s other strengths to shine. Treatments of classical works often become bogged down in intellectual history, disrupting their balance. Ward avoids this pitfall by keeping his historical review concise and prioritizing modern application. Though this focus may reduce the book’s utility for specialists, it is a worthwhile tradeoff, emphasizing pastoral application and making it an excellent resource for pastors and lay readers who enjoy the classics.

Thomas Ward’s *After Stoicism* bridges ancient wisdom and modern relevance, offering a thoughtful and accessible study of *The Consolation*. By situating Boethius within his philosophical and theological context, Ward illuminates enduring questions that resonate across the ages. This book is an

essential addition to the library of any pastor, parish, or lay reader seeking to engage the classics and apply their insights to today's world.

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The Anglican Office Book, 2nd Edition. Edited by Charles Lance Davis. Lake Almanor, CA: Whithorn Press, 2023. 2,247 pp. \$125.

One of the greatest fruits of the catholic revival in England was their renewal of liturgical life. This most often focused on supplementing and enriching the *Book of Common Prayer's* Holy Communion to put back on many of the riches of its catholic heritage, which had been pruned back for a season at the reformation. The Divine Office received relatively less of the enriching zeal that was directed towards renewing the Mass. *The Anglican Office Book* (herein abbreviated to AOB), represents the continuation of this living tradition of liturgical renewal. Released in Second Edition in 2023, the book has been compiled and edited by Fr. Lance Davis, a priest in the Anglican Catholic Church. His contribution is an excellent enrichment of Anglican worship in our day.

Drawing significantly on *The Prayer Book Office*, a similar work by Fr. Paul Hartzell published in 1944 and 1963, one of the defining features of the AOB is its ease of use in comparison to its predecessor. The AOB allows one to pray the offices “of the 1928 American Book of Common Prayer, supplemented with an expanded Kalendar, anthems, hymns, responses, and collects from the Sarum Breviary, other regional Books of Common Prayer, and the wider Western liturgical tradition.”¹ Just as various Missals allowed Anglo-Catholics of earlier generations to celebrate Mass drawing from the Prayer Book but enriched by supplements, so the AOB allows Anglicans today to pray the offices in a more fulsome way.

The AOB is bookended by the Old Testament at the front and the New Testament and the Books called Apocryphal at the back, all in the Authorized Version. The offices, Psalter, and other material can be found sandwiched in the center of the book. The offices are prefaced with the General Rubrics, the Kalendar along with Prayers and Thanksgivings, the Litany, an Office of the

¹ <https://store.standrewsalmanor.org/products/the-anglican-office-book-2nd-edition-with-the-holy-bible-authorized-version>