

ADAM DROZDEK
Duquesne University in Pittsburgh (USA)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8639-2727>

Godfrey Goodman and George Hakewill on the decay of the world

Abstract

The end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century was marked by theological discussions concerning the decay of the world. Godfrey Goodman, in *The fall of man*, presented an extensive argument in favor of inherent corruptibility of the world that gradually heads to its destruction and George Hakewill countered with a book-length rebuttal of this view. The views of these two clergymen, both of whom attempt to support the common opinion that the world was created to express the glory of God, are presented in this article.

Keywords: Godfrey Goodman, George Hakewill, the corruptibility of the world.

Godfrey Goodman i George Hakewill o upadku świata

Abstrakt

Koniec XVI i początek XVII w. upłynął pod znakiem dyskusji teologicznych na temat upadku świata. Godfrey Goodman w swojej książce *The Fall of man* przedstawił obszernie argumenty na rzecz esencjalnego zepsucia świata, które prowadziło w końcu do jego zniszczenia. Z kolei George Hakewill przeciwstawił się temu pogładowi, prezentując w swej książce liczne kontrargumenty. W niniejszym artykule przedstawione zostały poglądy obu tych duchownych, którzy mimo różnic między nimi starali się wzmocnić powszechny pogląd, że świat został stworzony dla chwały Bożej.

Słowa kluczowe: Godfrey Goodman, George Hakewill, zepsucie świata.

Since the beginning of Christianity, it was believed that the world was created for human beings to be happy on it and for the glory of God. However, humans failed at the very inception of their existence. The first parents disobeyed God, and sin entered the world. How did this sin affect the world? Many believed that the entire world suffered because of it, and this suffering was fatal: the world was

in a state of progressive degradation, in the state of decay, which would eventually be its undoing. Arguably, the most forceful and the most comprehensive expression of this view was given by Goodman at the dawn of the seventeenth century in a thick volume, *The fall of man* (1616).¹

1. The corruption of the world

Godfrey Goodman (1582–1656) was an Anglican clergyman with very strong Catholic leanings. Educated at the Trinity College, Cambridge, he was appointed to the rectory of Stapleford Abbots, Essex, in 1606; then, after a series of appointments, he became the bishop of Gloucester in 1624.²

Goodman was adamantly opposed to the contention of the atheists that Christianity promotes rules contrary to human inclinations, mysteries that defy reason, and the hope beyond probability. Not true, since if reason is rejected, then grace cannot be distinguished from error, as the time of miracles as the confirmation of truth has passed (F 8).³ Nothing contrary to the light of reason can be believed. Reason does not contradict Christian principles, which actually strengthen reason. True, natural reason cannot, by itself, grasp the mysteries of faith, but when enlightened by faith and sanctified by grace, it confirms and strengthens the principles of faith (9–10).

¹ The view of the corruptibility of the world and the view of the opponents of this opinion was widely discussed in the times of Goodman and an excellent overview of the polemic between the two sides at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century was presented by Victor Harris. 1966. *All coherence gone: a study of the seventeenth century controversy over disorder and decay in the universe*. London: Frank Cass, chapter 4; see also Richard Foster Jones. 1936. *Ancients and moderns*. St. Louis: Washington University, chapter 2.

² Geoffrey Ingle Soden. 1953. *Godfrey Goodman, Bishop of Gloucester, 1583–1656*. London: S.P.C.K.

³ The following references will be used:

A – G[odfrey] G[oodman] and G[eorge] H[akewill]. 1635. An answer to foure arguments, from G[odfrey] G[oodman], touching the decay, or preservation of the world from decay, chapter 5 in the third edition of Hakewill's book with separate pagination.

C – G[odfrey] G[oodman]. 1622. *The creatures praysing God: or, The religion of dumbe creatures. An example and argument for the stirring up of our devotion, and for the confusion of atheism*. London: Felix [!] Kingston.

F – [Godfrey Goodman]. 1616. *The fall of man, or the corruption of nature, proved by the light of our naturall reason. Which being the first ground and occasion of our Christian faith and religion, may likewise serve for the first step and degree of the naturall mans conversion*. London: Felix Kyngston and are to be sold by Richard Lee.

H – George Hakewill. 1635³ [1627]. *An apologie of the power and providence of God in the government of the world*. Oxford: William Turner.

T – G[odfrey] G[oodman of] G[louster], [signed in the dedication: Godfree [!] Goodman]. 1653. *The two great mysteries of Christian religion, the ineffable Trinity, wonderfull Incarnation, explicated, to the satisfaction of mans own naturall reason, and according to the grounds of philosophy*. London: J. Flesher.

God created the earth in the center and the heavens in circumference (F 16). However, a closer look at every natural and social aspect of the earth shows that the general tendency of all things is toward decay, and nature by itself cannot bring anything to perfection. A horse has to be trained to do its job, plants must be pruned and watered, earth must be tilled, metals purified, etc. (25), which should be done by rational agents since nature tends toward evil and human art tries “to repaire the ruin of nature.” Nature is corrupted “and much declined from her first perfection, which certainly was intended by the founder” (26).

The basic corruptibility of nature can be seen everywhere. Consider human life, which is filled with constant miseries, starting from birth: birth is painful for both the mother and for the child (F 326), the fetus can be stillborn; mothers may die; a newborn requires constant care (72), whereas other creatures are born with an adequate covering (hide, feathers, etc.), with natural defenses (74), they are “fed from above, . . . without any guide or direction they know the way to the teate/nipple” (75). For many years after birth, humans are like undeveloped creatures, whereas animals are fully functional right after birth (43, 313). In fact, “other creatures excel man in every sense” (76). Old people become bald, and things coming out from the human body are foul-smelling (77). There is a tendency toward gluttony in people and they are inclined to follow their lusts (79), whereas animals are temperate in their diet and thus not subject to distempers, unlike humans (81). Learning a trade is a difficult and lengthy process (85). Throughout their lives, people can be afflicted at any time by sickness and even plagues. In fact, people are more prone to diseases than other creatures; and there are different diseases for different parts of the body and for different seasons (94). “All the beasts of the field know what is profitable for their food, their fight, their sent, their owne knowledge sufficiently informes them”; in the case of a sickness, they find proper herbs; but people require a lot of research to know proper cures (96). Animals do not experience as much misery in their bodies as people do (107). Incidentally, God pronounced about creatures that they are good, but not about man; this is deferred to the day of judgment (262). Specific to people are mental miseries and hence the phenomenon of suicide (108): only humans commit suicide, in fact, only people are capable of it (57). Mentally ill is he who boasts of his vices and who considers virtues to be vices (110), hence the presence of fake morality: pride can be concealed (111), and virtue can be tainted by vice, e.g., courage may turn into fury (112). All people are inclined toward vices (113): “in the most sanctified man, you shall discern an inclination to sinne;” however, “nature hath imprinted in every man a hate and detestation of sinne,” vice itself is already a punishment, but by God’s decree, spiritual vices are translated into physical illnesses, for example, lust into the French disease (114, 232). Pleasures always end in discontent (147) and are spoiled by sorrows

(150). Human happiness on earth is never present; it is either past or future (153). People don't know what happiness is; they claim that others are happy, but not themselves (156).

Man is corrupt at every stage of life (F 207). People blame one another (208), they readily return evil for evil (209), turn good things into evil (210); even their good actions stem from evil intentions, such as charitable works being motivated by vainglory. They enjoy seeing misfortunes of others (211), and want for others to suffer the same misfortunes as themselves (212).

In any event, the whole of nature tends toward decay (F 349), and, in particular, all natural functions of the body are "tainted and defiled with corruption" (53). The human being "so farre exceeding all other creatures in that high prerogative of a reasonable and immortall soule, yet in regard of the corruption of his flesh, his condition is equall, if not inferiour to the beasts of the field." This must be a punishment (108).

Since all nature is "directed to man" (F 14), then after man has broken "his own bounds ... it must necessarily follow, that all the rest of the creatures which were bound or knit together to man should likewise be inordinate" (F 17). Since sin entered the world, the whole of nature, which was created for humans, has suffered. And again, since the world was created for human use, it contains the same seeds of corruption and "causes of death and corruption" (348).

Only human free will is responsible for this situation (F 27) and it appears that only human free will can do something about it. The spiritual aspect of existence should trump its physical side.

Only an unreasonable person would deny the existence of the soul (F 29). In fact, the soul is immaterial and thus immortal, it desires eternity most of all: "this is naturally ingrafted in all of us" (32). With heathens, I agree that "in the course of this life, Gods justice doth not sufficiently appeare;" this will be rectified in the afterlife (33). The soul was imprisoned in the darkness of the womb before birth, in the body, it is brought into the world though a messy and unclean process and only Christ "would never endure the baseness of his conception" (36). Whatever the state of nature is, the physical world will eventually pass away as it must, since if it were to continue for more millennia, it would not be able to support all people (383–384). In this situation, the care has to be taken of the immortal soul. However, the world would not pass away by itself, it will be supernaturally destroyed. The first universal destruction was caused by water in the flood, and the second will be done by fire, a forerunner to which was the destruction of Sodom (290). The use of fire is not accidental – nothing in God's providential care is – since fire purifies things from poison and so it will purify the world in the final conflagration and "the nature shall bee restored to her first perfection and integritie." Chemistry separates the dross from the rest and shows that evil and

poison have polluted nature. This evil has crept into nature and overpowered its good qualities (397). And then there will be the last judgment, which is hastened by the general decay (383).

People should see all life's miseries as the punishment for sin, since "God inclosed all men in one common depth of misery" after expulsion from paradise (F 182). However, these miseries should lead to the dislike of nature and to seeking refuge in God's mercy; to make it easier, joys should be destroyed as vanity (159, 200) to see the future freedom in God (160). From that perspective, there may be as much contentment in the poor cottage as in a rich palace (162). People should meditate on God and His kingdom; if they cannot, they should consider their pleasures and joys as vanity (194). If that does not work, they should consider what contentment nature can give (195). In the end, refuge can be found only under the wings of God, through the belief that Christ is the propitiation of human sins (402–403); "there is no joy or comfort to man, unlesse it be to the Christian man" (205). People should rely upon divine testimony and the exposition of its true meaning "by the daily practise of the Church, consent of Fathers, verdict of counsailes, hath continually, visibly and successively from Christ and his Apostles descended to us" (272). In a word, only the afterlife is a release from the universal decay.

2. The excellence of the world

Although the well-intentioned picture of the world painted by Goodman is rather off-putting and dispiriting, which is impressed on the reader on hundreds of pages by hundreds of instances, Goodman, as the clergyman, did not forget that the world is, after all, the creation of the benevolent God and that even reason tells people that the end of creation is to glorify and serve God (F 11). A clockmaker should be praised if a clock can work for many years, so it is with the world, which has existed for thousands of years without change; thus, God's providence is manifested by the continuation of the world (271). Moreover, "God permitteth nature both to shew her integritie, and to boast of her perfection, that although she be corrupted, yet is it onely some accidentall corruption; and being thus corrupted, she seemes to make some recompence with the pleasant change of variety" (229). Nature is corrupted, but not to the core? Is it apparently corrupted or does decaying touch only the superficial aspect of nature, but not its essence? And what would this essence be? With a touch of peripatetic and scholastic thought, Goodman stated that the form of earthly creatures is spiritual, immaterial; "the forms of things are substances immateriall" (31). Would nature boast of its variety of forms? Goodman considered natural phi-

losophy as the best of all human arts and sciences and although God “punisheth man with the heavie yoake of ignorance, yea, of the ignorance of himself” (393), this yoke does not appear to be overwhelming. Chemistry teaches us that “malignity and poison consists onely in the upper crust of thing, *in rerum superficie*; the deeper you dive into the substance of any creature, the more you shall acknowledge the goodnesse and perfection of the creature” indicating that “all things in their owne proper essence were good ... in their owne roote, and in their first ground of nature they are freed and priveleged from all poison and infection” (396). Thus, “the evill in nature, could not together subsist with the first ordination of nature” (397).

Some six short years after *The fall of man* came out for the first time, Goodman published in 1622 his sermon, *The creatures praysing God*, in which the tone permeating his large opus curiously changed. It almost seems that the sermon was not authored by Goodman; it was published semi-anonymously, signed only with the initials G.G. and in the French edition of the book the author is shown with the translated last name as Geoffroy Bon-Homme de Ruthin, with Ruthin being the Goodman’s birthplace (for the confirmation of Goodman’s authorship, cf. A 191).

According to Goodman, the praise of God requires the power and ability given by God to His creation. And thus, stones in their silence and animals in their sounds and motions can praise God just as much as humans, just as stated in Ps. 148. The creation speaks through silence since its elements show “their excellent nature, their rare and wonderful properties, therein they speake their Maker.” That is, the makeup of creation reveals God as its Creator (C 2). The natural service of creation outside humans is a form of natural religion. Morality is not limited to humans only since, for instance, the Bible says, go to an ant, sluggard (Prov. 6:6) (5). People can see the beauty of creatures, “whereas a right understanding would conclude, great is the beauty of Creatures, therefore how great and incomparable is the beauty of God!” (6). People who could not go beyond senses, worshipped the sun, the moon, and other created things. There is an “ingrafted principle” saying that each effect has a cause and by this principle the creatures say that “their composition and dissolution must necessarily presuppose first a compounder ... that there being a time, when they were not, needs they must want a cause first to subsist” (7–8), and thus, “some intelligent cause did first ordaine them, which now preserves them in their naturall course.” Blind fortune must be excluded, since reason opposes the possibility that randomness could create such a great order. By their existence, creatures acknowledge the existence of God and Maker (9). They acknowledge one God, since “all nature is directed to one end.” “Philosophy beats upon this Axiome, that nature desires to worke with the fewest instruments, and therefore

every thing is to be reduced to the fewest principles.” In effecting anything, one cause is sufficient, since multiple causes may conflict with each other (10). God must be a cause of Himself, eternal, immutable, the best being, infinite since He cannot prescribe limits to Himself, and He is a simple being, i.e., without parts (11), infinitely perfect; as a simple being, without diversity of faculties, and so, there is only one absolute perfection in God; thus, the wisdom of God is the power of God, etc., although to humans they appear to be different attributes (12).

Wisdom is not a privilege of rational beings alone. “There is a wisdom of nature, there is a knowledge in dumbe beasts, they know their times and their seasons, their manner of working, and what is fit and agreeable to the state of their bodies; and why may there not be a naturall faith in them, as well as a naturall wisdom and knowledge?” (C 20). They praise God through people and human praise becomes theirs. This praise is nature’s “daily taske and imployment” (21).

Nature is God’s temple (C 22). Creation sings to God, “the little chirping birds, the Wren and the Robin, they sing a treble; the Gold-finch, the Nightingale, they joyne in the meane; the Black-bird, the Thrush, they beare the tenour, while the foure-footed beasts, with their bleating and bellowing, they sing a base” and in different seasons they make different music (24–25). All things are “ordained to Gods glory” (27). That is, as fascinating as knowledge about nature can be, it is only a road sign pointing to God, a step leading to God “sending us from the outward shop of his works, to the inward schoole of his words, from the theatre of the Creatures, to the sanctuary of his dwelling, there to learne a new lesson in the knowledge of God” (16).

In nature, creatures follow the laws proper to their kind, which are their decalogue and “they are still carried with the same course, which God first appointed; the Sunne keeps his just houre of rising, the Moone observes her certaine revolutions, so all the dumbe Creatures, and all the beasts of the field doe the like” (26). Is this an indication of the worldwide decay? Nature is the work of God filled with creatures whose “perfection speakes his excellency”. The magnificence of God’s work is indicated by the nature, variety, and perfection of creatures, their excellent properties so well fitting their nature, by wonderful manifestations of this nature, by an excellent order and proportions in each creature individually, by the context of the entire world, by “such a constancy and perseverance in keeping their due course” and in serving people (22). Does this sound like a sign of universal decay going on since the creation of the world? The world is God’s temple with heavens forming the roof and the earth the footstool and “wherein nothing is wanting which may serve for beauty and ornament” (23), hardly a place subjected to gradual decay.

3. A challenge: George Hakewill

Goodman's view of the world in decline did not remain unchallenged. His opinion was far from universal and met with a strong rebuttal, in an equally thick volume, *An apologie of the power and providence of God in the government of the world* (1627) by George Hakewill (1578–1649), an Anglican clergyman educated in Exeter College, Oxford, where he became a rector in 1642.⁴

Hakewill wrote this book to vindicate God's honor since the opinion of nature's decay "not a little impeached and blemished" it (H 18); it destroys hope and discourages from virtuous behavior (20) and from effects of exhortation when people think that famines and pestilences are not the punishment of God but natural events in the aging world, so that people won't care for repentance and calling for God's grace (23); besides, this opinion is based on weak grounds. It is based on the fictions of poets, starting with Homer and continued by Virgil, Juvenal, and Horace (25), on the idea of a lost golden age.

Hakewill argued, among other things, that the complaint about the decay of the natural world is unjustified. If these complaints were true, there should be no suitable weather today for plants to grow (H 127). As to the decays of water and fish: there are the same seas and rivers today as in the past, and what they lose in one place, they recover in another (139). There is the same amount of fish today as before, they are also of the same size and quality (144). Rivers carry earth to the seas, but the seas send back slime and sand (148). The seas are maintained by the return of rivers drained from them, and the earth is maintained by the dissolved bodies which came from it (149). All plants and animals, including thistles, wolves, and scorpions, were created before the fall (154); that is, there is nothing by itself bad about them since God pronounced His creation to be good and they had surely been beneficial and useful to people in their state of innocence (153). If the earth is less fertile today, it is because of human negligence, not because of "the tiredness or age of the earth" (155). God so ordered that "the industry of man should in all things concur with the works of Nature to perfect them" (156). Old famines were more severe than those of today (157). "Corne and victuals" were more expensive in the past than they are today (159). There is no decrease of the fruitfulness, growth, and the duration of plants (160). Minerals in the earth do not decay by themselves but by "insatiable desire of mankinde" (163).

The complaints about the decay of mankind are equally unjustified. The human body before the fall was dissoluble and mortal since it was composed of ele-

⁴ An encyclopedic entry by W.P. Courtney in: Leslie Stephen, Sidney Lee. Eds. 1890. *Dictionary of national biography*. Vol. 24. New York: Macmillan, 6–8.

ments, but by special dispensation man was immortal (H 171). By special privilege, people before the flood lived hundreds of years; God gave them wisdom in respect to diet and plants to heal diseases (173). Since Moses' times, human lifespan has not change (174). Many people live for over 100 years (181). If human lives were shorter, human intemperance would be at fault, not the decay of nature (186). The duration of pregnancy has not changed (190). The age of matrimony and procreation is now about the same as in the past (194). The beginning and then the ending of a professional career started at a younger age in the past, which means people lived for a shorter time (198). People are about the same height today as they were in the past (232); the sizes of houses and furniture are similar (219). If people decreased in stature, so everything else should be a subject of the same natural laws. Also, if people have been decreasing since creation, they should be today of the size of mice (222). There is no decline in the power of the mind. The soul is infused right after birth. The principal faculties of the soul are imagination, judgment, and memory (253) and thus, "if then wee come short of their (ancients') perfections, it is not because *Nature* is generally defective in us, but because we are wanting to our selves, and do not strive to make use of, and improve those abilities wherewith *God* and *Nature* hath endowed us" (258). As to the human learning and the arts, it seems to be a cyclical progress: birth, growth, flourishing, and failing, and then resurrection and reflourishing all over again (259, 40, 54). Recent lawyers are preferable to those of old since their learning "is grown to much more exactnesse and perfection, then former ages had." Medicine is much better now than before (270), and historiography far exceeds what the ancients achieved (278).

To remain with the humankind, the decay of manners is also unjustified; there is a vicissitude and revolution in virtues and vices (H 331). "The world is sometimes better & sometimes worse, according to the times of warre or peace, the conditions of Princes and Lawes, and the execution of them. Sometimes *vertue* increaseth in one Kingdome, and decreaseth in another; and againe in the same Kingdome *one vice* growes up, and another withers, at least wise for a time" (332); vices change and move from place to place conflicting with one another, they never disappear (333). The "*inhumanitie* and *brutish stupiditie*" of the ancients was manifested in their idolatry, thereby acting as "men voide of *common Reason*, shewing themselves more blockish then the very blockes they adored" (342). The Romans were considered the most civilized nation in antiquity and best-disciplined (370); however, consider their cruelty and their "savage and barbarous inhumanity" toward the Jews (371), Christians (372), toward other peoples (377), and toward one another (379), and Hakewill showed at length the immorality of the Romans in all aspects of their life. Any alleged virtues of the Romans are dimmed by the genuine virtues of Christianity since no one can be

truly just without being religious, and no one can be truly religious without being Christian (502), and, with a touch of jingoism, Hakewill also stated that the valor and magnanimity of the English are not at all inferior to this of the Romans (518), and some excellent recent princes are not matched by any past princes, to mention Edward VI, queen Elizabeth, and king James (540).

For Hakewill, everything is well in the world; there may be some occasional lapses of nature into decay, but the losses caused by it will be offset by gains. The elements “decay in their *parts*, but so as by *reciprocall compensation* they both loose and gaine” (28). At worst, there is a cyclic order in nature in which periods of destructiveness are followed by periods of regeneration of nature’s elements on even higher level than in previous periods. After all, nature is “*the Great power of God*” (15),⁵ and thus, its natural laws allow it to lift itself above temporary losses.

4. The excellence of the corrupted world

There were some exchanges of letters between Goodman and Hakewill concerning the problem of the decay of the world, and some of the back-and-forth is included in Hakewill’s book, with Goodwin’s remarks being brief and Hakewill’s responses very generous with words.

It appears from this polemic that Goodman’s views concerning the degradation of the physical world did not altogether change. He reiterated his view that nature stands between generation and corruption, but wholly inclines toward corruption, which implies a general decay (A 1): because the world came to its perfection “by degrees” during creation, so “by degrees in probability it should againe fall from its perfection” (40). In particular, there is only one way of human conception and birth, but “infinite ways” of death and destruction; there are many years of growth, but destruction comes in an instant; there is one state of health, but many diseases (3), besides, for the first 2000 years, the Scripture mentions no diseases or infirmity (9).

Various examples indicate the ubiquitous tendency toward decay. For instance, mountains get smaller because of erosion caused by water and air and are not restored (A 61). The world has a succession of seasons which implies a corruption; this corruption could be prevented by “a special providence” which God can withdraw “as himself thought fit, without any breach of his promise” (140). Also, the ancients surpassed us “in a ten-folde proportion” in respect to innova-

⁵ In this way, “nature is close enough to God to prevent systematic decay,” Ronald W. Hepburn. 1955. “George Hakewill: the virility of nature.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 16: 146.

tion, piety, and not succumbing to delusion (167) and, in particular, the Romans gave excellent laws and they are “examples and presidents in every kinde of vertue” (187).

Hakewill said in his book that God pronounced that His creation was good, which could hardly be done if “seeds and principles of corruption” were embedded in the world (H 55), but, in a remarkable statement, Goodwin stated that the principle of decay follows not from any punishment for sin, but from the corporeal nature which wears out with use (A 44) and the punishment for sin only exacerbated that process. In paradise, there was a tree of life, “a soveraigne medicine, or an excellent antidote against natures consumption,” but, still, decay would not be stopped so that “in due time there should have beene a happy translation” (45). Corruption and mortality are proper to the corporeal nature, thus, before the sentence of death was passed, humans and the world had been corruptible, but before that sentence, God’s mercy would have preserved people and the world from corruption (113), with which Hakewill disagreed on scriptural grounds: death entered the world through sin (Rom. 5:12) and God pronounced after creation that everything was good (Gen. 2:30) (120); it is not true that “the principles of corruption imbred in it selfe” (Gen. 1:31, Wisdom 1:14), and even Goodman himself seems to have pointed to this (F 26, 149, 396).

Goodman propped his contention with an ontological observation that there is elementary matter, which can be subject of contrary qualities, and thus, it is inclined to decay. Celestial matter does not corrode, but it can be worn out through use (A 195). Maybe the seeds of that contention were already present in the original statement that celestial bodies are composed of some kind of matter (F 78). Moses apparently agreed that everything is made of one matter, of which also the elements are composed. The heavens are made of this one matter (79). That is, the four elements originated from one matter and probably because this original matter is of the nature of spirits, and as such, is not composed (A 196),⁶ the elements are not affected by heat, drought, or weight, so, they cannot decay (F 79). Whence decay, then? Apparently from the composition (cf. F 171). Since Plato, the simplicity or uncompounded structure of an entity, such as the spirit, has been used as an argument for its eternity, that is, the impossibility to decay, but, according to Goodman, even the simple, uncompounded matter of heaven can be worn out, a claim that Hakewill argued had never been made before Goodman (A 199). On that note, as Goodman continued, there is also glorified matter that will last to eternity. Heavenly matter is a medium between elementary matter and

⁶ Incidentally, the origin of the four elements from one matter could explain the possibility of the transmutation of elements when, for instance, the earth could turn into water and air could condense into water (F 282).

glorified matter (A 195). The sublunaries consist of matter and form, the heavens are matter without form, and above the heavens, there are forms without matter. Goodman said he never believed that the heavens were corruptible the way inferior bodies are by dissolution, but because of heavens' own "inbred weaknesse" imparted by God and thus their destruction is not contrary to their nature, but God will "hasten that course to which they did naturally incline of themselves" (196). That effectively means that, as Hakewill stated, "seeds and principles of corruption" were embedded in the universe, even in the pure matter of heavens which traditionally was considered incorruptible, and thus, eternal; these seeds are sown by some unspecified "inbred weaknesse" which causes the heavens to wear out through use, making them subject to gradual decay and eventual annihilation. This goes back to the concept of privation.

In *The fall of man*, Goodman mentioned very briefly the concept of privation in the context of the Augustinian approach to explain the existence of evil. There were, he said, evils "incident to nature ... having no entitie in themselves ... being no *transcendentia* ... they are punishments of nature, and have crept into nature, since the first institution thereof." Privation is "when a thing is capable to be, and ought to be, but is not;" it is the first principle of nature, which assumes that things should have existed and should have been more perfect from the start (F 390–391). That can easily lead to the identification of evil with privation: evil is a nonexistence of goodness, just as darkness is the absence of light, and privation is the absence of something; thus, they are one and the same. More expressly, evil is "in it selfe a mere defect and privation" (417), similarly, sin is a defect, a privation, "a kinde of nothing" (422). Hakewill was correct when he protested by saying that it is unwarranted to claim that privation inclines nature to corruption; privation is about "the bringing in of a new forme, and not to the casting out of the old, and by meanes thereof nature inclines wholly to generation, and to corruption not at all" (A 2) or maybe, not quite consistently, privation "implies an endlesse circle of corruptions and generations by turnes, in things generable and corruptible" (97), so, it is not inherently evil. Privation, which was barely mentioned in the *The fall of man*, was elevated to the prominent position in the sparrings with Hakewill, where Goodman stated at the very outset that there are three principles of being, matter, form, and privation, which is the statement uncannily similar to the opening statement of ch. 2 of Aquinas' *De principiis naturae* except that Aquinas considered privation to be an accidental principle (*per accidens*), not essential (*per se*), like matter and form, whereas for Goodman, privation appears to be an on equal footing with the other two. For Aquinas, privation was something neutral, something from which generation starts, not an original evil.

And yet, Goodman's message was not all doom-and-gloom. The ultimate message, important for any clergyman, was to bring people to the recognition

of God as the Creator of the world, which is an expression of His, glory and to bring people to Him as the only source of true happiness in the life to come. There is thus a theological problem of how to balance, as it were, the glory of the world vs. the glory of God. Ascribing too much perfection to the world and to its autonomy can take away people's attention from God and concentrate on earthly life; on the other hand, the denigration of the world and corporeal nature brings more attention to God, the eternal source of existence. It seems that Goodman tried to maintain this balance by infusing corruptibility into the material world. And yet, perfection was not altogether denied to the world, but this perfection was not an inherent attribute of the world, but the result of God's constant providential care for it. The world could not be left to its own devices, since it would collapse into chaos very quickly under its corruptible weight. It is getting worse in many areas, but this is all human fault by bringing the sin into the world and the need of using decay as a divine countermeasure and punishment for this sin. And so, human misery results from God's justice, which is caused by human transgression (F 66) and then God uses natural means to punish human sins (91). Incidentally, sin did not originate in humans, but in a temptation coming from the outside (420): first, Eve, who may not have known God's command, was tempted, and Adam excused himself by saying that Eve given to him by God, gave him the fruit, so he may have assumed that it came from God (430). In any event, the world is tainted by sin and this sin should not continue infinitely, so it gradually degenerates and when it reaches old age, God consumes it with fire to purify it "and in the ashes thereof raise up a new frame, a new world, sanctified, glorified, which without spot or sinne may last for eternity" (A 145).

Notwithstanding the world's corruptibility, people should "acknowledge the invisible God, in the visible creatures; to beholde the wisdome, goodnesse, and power of the maker, in the framing and disposing of nature," and they should see how nature supports grace, how animals can be conduits of grace (F 413). This world is a book in which each letter points to God (T 25). Consider the bounded nature of creatures and also the "great variety and perfection in their own kind ..., by this nature, such an excellent order and proportion, both in themselves, and to the whole universe; through this nature, such a constancy and perseverance in keeping their due course, in performing their duty, service, and Ministry to man" (26). Consider animals that show exceptional skills in escaping predators, finding food, and building nests, all that behavior "grounded in wisdom," whereby we can only "admire the goodness and power of their Maker; that such unreasonable creatures in themselves, should notwithstanding order themselves, according to the rules of best reason" (29). "The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars, do move as God first appointed them, they do not alter

their course, they neither hasten nor slacken their motion: so it is with the Elements and dumb Creatures, they follow the course of their nature, according to that path wherein they were first put, they still keep their way, and do not offend” (74). This, however, is hardly a proof of the perfection of the world; this perfection is the divine uninterrupted doing: God daily supports and preserves the world from falling into nothingness (104). As to animals, unreasonable creatures move according to the rules of reason which shows that “some intelligent cause did so first ordaine them, which now preserves them in their natural course” (A 92).

In all this, despite the opposing view held by Hakewill, Goodman said to him, “after some little agitation of questions between us, it is not impossible but we may agree in the conclusion” (191). The view of the decay of the world can hardly be reconciled with the view of the world being free from it, but they could agree on what it all means from the theological perspective, which was arguably the most important for the two clergymen: the world was created by God for His glory and for humans (F 20, 68, 107, 218, 332, 348, T 50, H 75, 248, A 77), who are the only ones who can glorify God on earth, so, if there were no people, how could this glory be expressed? Also, corruptible or not, the world manifests so much harmonious complexity and perfection that it could only be the work of an omnipotent Creator. Both Goodman and Hakewill believed, on scriptural grounds, in the inevitability of the end of the world and the accompanying last judgment, and they cared for people’s fate afterward, trying to bring as many people as possible to the salvific message of the Gospel, although their metaphysical approaches were quite different.

Appendix: Jan Jonston

Jan Jonston (1603–1675), born and educated in Poland, was a son of a Scottish immigrant, seventeenth-century naturalist. He studied theology and medicine at the University of St. Andrews and also at Cambridge, Frankfurt, and Leiden. He lived most of his life in Poland, active as a scholar and publishing numerous books, primarily on natural history. During his time at Cambridge, he authored in Latin *The constancy of nature* (1632). As he stated in this book, “I have borrowed (*mutuata*) especially from the Reverend Sir George Haukwill (!) of St. T.D. England, a copious treatise on this thesis written in English, the material well-explained, however, and preserving its proper sense, and I have wished to bring forth the main points, on the contrary, modestly, and to communicate the same to the literate world.” Jonston also mentioned Hakewill’s “*Apo-logia providentiae divinae*, from which we have extracted (*excerpsimus*) most

(*maxima parte*) of this work.”⁷ Perhaps because this passing remark is buried in the book, it has been universally ignored. In many publications about Jonston, *The constancy of nature* is discussed as his work, presumably because his name appears on the title page. However, the book can be most charitably considered a synopsis of Hakewill’s massive work. It is really a collection of excerpts from Hakewill’s work translated into Latin from English, with many quotations in Hakewill’s book already in Latin making them easy to copy. There are isolated additions to these excerpts, but they are very few and far between. The excerpts are frequently taken out of sequence, nevertheless, the arguments, the views, the factoids are all Hakewill’s. The book could be considered Jonston’s exercise in Latin while in England, but the impression that this is outright plagiarism simply cannot be avoided. And yet, while presenting the many things that Jonston has proven in this book, one author never mentioned Hakewill.⁸ In a similar vein, another author praises Jonston by saying “it would be a mistake not to view him through the prism of his treatise *De naturae constantia*, which presents a high-class link in the creative inventiveness and originality of the philosophy of nature and human life. ... With the treatise *De naturae constantia*, Jonston proved that he was capable of thoughtful ideas that have not lost their relevance today in the perspective of the currently developing zoology.”⁹ No reference to Hakewill. In a 20-page article dedicated to *The constancy of nature*, yet another author did not once mention Hakewill’s name.¹⁰ In the preface to the Polish translation of *The constancy of nature*, published in the prestigious Library of the Classics of Philosophy, the author lists Bacon and Machiavelli as influences of Jonston, stating that “Haukwill should also be mentioned, as Jonston quotes him.” The fact that the author uses a misspelled version of Hakewill’s name shows that he never actually consulted the book, which would surely have shown him that Hakewill’s influence is more than marginal.¹¹ Interestingly, one author, keen on showing that Jonston somehow influenced Spinoza, was unable to consult Haukwill’s (!) book, but, as he phrased it, “it nevertheless seems to me certain that the work of Jonston is not

⁷ Ioh[annes] Ionstonus. 1632. *Naturae constantia*. Amsterdami: Apud Guilielmmum Blaey, 3, 160.

⁸ Adam Matuszewski. 2011. “Popularyzacja nauki europejskiej w twórczości Jana Jonstona”. *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki* 56 (3–4): 57–75.

⁹ Stanisław Szpilczyński. 1976. “Jan Jonston z Szamotuł. Tytaniczny trud barokowego erudyty w świetle wielkiej dydaktyki”. *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka* 2: 226.

¹⁰ Zbigniew Pietrzak. 2022. “Znaczenie idei «niszczenia się świata» w kształtowaniu filozofii przyrody Jana Jonstona w dziele *O stałości natury*”. *Ruch Filozoficzny* 78 (2): 275–297.

¹¹ Stefan Ziemiński. Wstęp. In Jan Jonston. 1960. *O stałości natury*. Warszawa: PWN, xv; Ziemiński disregarded Jonston’s remark that Haukwill (!) was “the principal source and the foundation of this little book”, 169–170.

a simple translation, as claimed by Estreicher.”¹² It is interesting that Estreicher is the only author who saw Jonston’s book as completely unoriginal, stating that “Jonston translated and poured it [Haukwill’s (!) book] in his own way into Latin.”¹³ Interestingly, Hakewill himself got hold of Jonston’s books and, in the third edition of his *Apologie*, he included a note to the reader stating that *The constancy of nature* is “the matter little else but a translation of mine contracted into a narrower compasse, the methode is mine, the arguments are mine, the authorities mine, the instances mine, but by mangling and gelding of it, hee hath neither retained the force of my reasons, nor the face of my discourse True indeed it is, that in two or three places he hath named me, yet so as he not only mistakes my name, but would not seeme to have borrowed from me so much as it is apparent he hath, yet thus I will say for him, that his stile is not to be discommended, and in some other workes of his hee hath shewed himselfe not unlearned.”¹⁴ True enough, Jonston was a learned man, but *The constancy of nature* should be the last book to make any claim about his creative inventiveness, originality, or scholarly acumen.

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¹³ Karol Estreicher. 1900. *Bibliografia polska*. Vol. 18. Kraków: Drukarnia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 616.

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