

# BODY, SOUL, AND SIN IN 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY BRITISH PURITANISM<sup>1</sup> THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS ADAMS (1583-1652)

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**ABSTRACT.** The soul and the body have been constant subjects for theological debates within the churches. Throughout the ages, the accent fell on one or the other, but it was quite clear the value of the soul was greater than that of the body. Despite the superiority of the soul, the body's importance is not to be undermined. As theological insight developed and it met with various cultural and religious beliefs, it answered the issue of the soul and body in various ways. After two thousand years of theology, debates over the importance of the body in relation to the soul, still linger. In this essay the attempt is describe the importance of the body, as found in the writings of 17<sup>th</sup> century British Puritan, Thomas Adams. The subject of the essay is to clarify whether the body was considered important in relation to the soul. In this context, several other question are to be answered, if possible, such as: "What is the importance of the body for a devout Christian?", "How is the body to be treated, in relation to sin and sanctification?"

**KEY WORDS:** body, soul, sin, sickness, Puritan

## **Introduction**

### **Short Biography of Thomas Adams (1583-1652)**

Thomas Adams was described by Robert Southey as "the prose Shakespeare of Puritan theologians... scarcely inferior to Fuller in wit or to Taylor in fancy" (Brown 1900: 89). Southey quotes Thomas Adams in his works, but the description of Adams as being the Shakespeare of Puritan theologians cannot be traced (the formulation appears in Grosart's description of Adams in the *Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900*, volume 1 (Grosart 1885: 102). Even if this description cannot be traced, it has been accepted as given by Southey, depicting a man intensely invested into his literary art. Giving Adams the benefit of the doubt, it is safe to say that his intent was to use the

1 There is a lively debate on whether Thomas Adams was a true Puritan. According to some he was, at best, a moderate Puritan, while others define him as a non-puritan Calvinist (see McGee 1998: 418).

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literary means to convey a colorful, but vivid meaning, that would stick to the hearers and readers minds and hearts. He accomplished his purpose despite a life of near poverty and filled with physical sickness.

Adams was a Cambridge graduate (he considered the nature as God's epistle to the world, where man is both actor and spectator. Man is only an actor, incapable of seeing the work of God, see Marshall 2016: 70), were he obtained his BA in 1601 and his MA in 1606. A year later he was ordained and worked in various rural churches, which were barely able to pay his due. Later he moved to London, where he was the curator of Northill in Bedfordshire. He lost this job when the Northill College Manor was sold. For the rest of his life, Adams tried to make ends meet for him and his family. It was this struggle that lead him towards a Gospel of social justice. He saw and understood the exploitation of the poor, making him one of the most vocal advocates of social involvement, during the economic and social struggles that marked the beginning of early modern England.

When he became vicar of Willington, in 1611, he dedicated his energy to the ministry and publishing his sermons. He had published several sermons until 1615, each one more popular than the other, but he remained steadfast in the purpose of his writings, namely to beat down sin and convert sinners. Because he wrote with the purpose of publishing, Adams used, with great skill, the rhetorical, devotional, and literary traditions, in order to form his particular style. The main characteristic of this style is the use of satiric prose. He made excellent use of the medieval tradition of the *descriptio*, by describing various kinds of characters, such as atheists, epicures, libertines, common profane, unjust magistrates, deceitful lawyers, bribe-takers, and ending with usurers, all praying on the weak and the poor. The purpose of these characters is to aid his audience to recognize the folly of vice, repent and repudiate sin, and, finally, seek the forgiveness and peace of God.

Adams wrote and published a great part of his sermons during times of bodily illness. The last appointment was that of Rector of St. Bennet's, which he held until he died. He was appointed in 1619, but his wife died in December, leaving two daughters and a boy to his care. In 1622, King James discouraged lectureships, which affected Adams' activity. By this time, however, he was one of the most famous preachers in London. Tensions rose during King James' rule, but Adams continued publishing his sermons. His publishing activity culminated with *The Workes of Tho. Adams*, in 1629. From then until the year of his death, 1652, he published no other sermon, except his last two, in the year of his passing. Perhaps his most impressive and massive work was the commentary on Second Peter, which had 1634 pages. However, since 1629 he vanished from public life.

Thomas Adams was not a ‘regular’ Puritan. He was at odds with William Laud, but he survived the bishop’s execution, as well as that of Charles I. Adams supported monarchy and the ecclesiastical hierarchical establishment, namely he supported Episcopalianism. On the other hand, he was a strong Calvinist, clearly anti-papal and anti-ceremony, which he considered unimportant. Therefore, Adams was considered neither a full conformist, nor a full Puritan.

Sadly, both his daughters died before him, and towards the end of his life, he was almost completely depended on the financial support of his former parishioners, whom he thanked in his last sermons and urged them to seek God’s grace. Adams lived through a time of great turmoil for England, but Puritanism had begun to decline after 1590, and the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was not faring better (Lake 2004: 284).

As centuries past, Adams was defined either as “a known profane pot-companion... and otherwise loose liver, a temporizing Ceremony monger and malignant against the parliament” or “the prose Shakespeare of Puritan theologians”, but as such, only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Politics and literary history played a significant role in such definitions. He was neither a strict Puritan, nor a strict Anglican, yet still managed to find himself cast out of both camps (Baker at <https://www.radford.edu/~mpbaker/adamsart.html>; the information in this biography was taken from the online version of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography: British Prose Writers of the Early Seventeenth Century*, vol. 151, see Lein 3-10). For the intent of this paper, Adams can be considered an early Puritan, or a low church Episcopalian (McCullough, Adlington, and Rhatigan 2011: 425).

### **Puritans<sup>2</sup> on Body, Soul, and Sin**

The connection between body, soul, and sin is important because it sheds light on how Puritans viewed salvation, sin, the church, and fellowship, with one’s own, as well as with those from outside the church. (The “puritan” understood as one who considers sex a shameful act, even in marriage, is not to be overlapped with “Puritan”, a person who adheres to a certain body of theology. Puritans, with a small “p” have been part of all religious systems, see DiGiacomo 1991: 38). This kind of understanding will ensure the avoidance of preconceived notions, that do only harm to the view of those that lived before us.

Puritanism was not a monolithic theological movement. It had various colors and shades, depending on the region and the cultural environment it reached. Despite the variations, Puritanism was “militantly functional: the

2 Paas offers an excellent historical perspective on the development of the term “Puritan” (see Paas 2007: 106-7).

beauty of words, whether as images or sounds, mattered less than their capacity for moving readers further along the *ordo salutis* or renewing their sense of having been there before” (Hammond 2000: 45). The following short presentation is based on Elizabeth Reis’ evaluation of New England Puritanism and their take on the matter of body, soul, and sin. While the main character of this article is one of the earliest Puritans, who had nothing to do with New England whatsoever, the New England Puritans bring forth a view that aids the understanding of Puritanism as a whole. Reis’ presentation is valuable because it shows how Puritans viewed the connection between body and soul, in comparison with one of the earliest takes on these matters.

New England Puritans <sup>(the</sup> descendants of the New England Puritans did not manage to preserve mementos of their lives, in order to illustrate their character. This leaves us with a lesser history that would have showed a detailed account of their lives, see Langworthy 1862: 361) regarded the body and soul as feminine. Both men’s and women’s bodies were considered to have *feminine* characteristics. The most basic one was that they were insatiable, both in lust and desire. Apparently, the reason is that neither are powerful enough to stand against Satan’s temptations. Satan would tempt the soul through the body. This attribute was thought to belong to both male and female bodies and souls, because women were considered weaker vessels, a common interpretation of apostle Peter’s words. The women’s insatiable soul would make them prone to temptation and easier to lead into sin, thus corrupting their souls. Once corrupt by Satan, women could end up as *witches*. The form and essence of a witch was her allegiance and relation to Satan, a living proof of complete depravity.

However, men were not faring any better. In fact, men and women were considered equal, from a spiritual perspective. As mentioned before, men also had a feminine soul, which made them equally prone to be tempted and give in to temptation. Therefore, the capacity for evil was just as powerful for both genders. The problem was that there was a bias towards women, because as their physical and emotional traits showed vulnerability, lack of satisfaction, and yearning, their soul’s root must be the same. The most evident sins, for women, were pride, deceit, and envy, which created unhappiness. The feminine soul of women was discontent with its lot, ever desiring more for themselves. It was not so much about desiring control, as satisfaction, or what they were due. The soul and the body of the woman was frail, submissive, and passive, but being passive or active was not aiding a woman’s case when accused of a certain deed. Being passive or active led men’s logic and judgment to the same conclusion: the woman is frail and prone to submit to the Devil’s seduction.

Paradoxically, the body was considered the weakest part of men's being. The strengths of the body derive from faith, not the soul, but the soul feeds the body's capacity to withstand temptation. The soul is as strong as the body is strong. If the body fails in temptation, then the soul is to blame. However, if the body resists temptation, the soul is the reason for the bodily victory. The body was depicted as the perfect traitor, able and willing to give in to both the world's temptations as well as those of the Devil.

The body and the soul are essential for human beings; in whatever way the soul is considered more important than the body. Having said that, the body is to submit to the soul, lest the soul falls and takes the body with it into damnation. Since the body was the path to the soul, it was both the protector and the traitor of the soul. By falling into sin, the will was also affected, and it resided in the soul. Therefore, the only responsible for sin was not the body, but the soul. It follows that Satan's bondage was for the soul, not the body.

### **The Body, the Soul, the Sin<sup>3</sup>**

Adams portrays the body mostly from a biological perspective. He uses both "body" and "flesh". It seems that most of the times the word "body" has a positive meaning, referring to the human body *per se*. When he uses "flesh", it has almost always a negative meaning, referring to the fallen human nature.

Even back in his day, the benefits of moderate exercise were well known. In his *Politic hunting*, he advises moderate exercise, since it preserves health, which is destroyed by sedentarism; it strengthens the body for harder labors, which, in Adams' view, is war itself; and lastly, the mind is offered a much needed breath of air, since it is many a time involved in difficult and strenuous endeavors (Adams I: 3).

The body is also seen in connection to reason, or other traits, which tend to sharpen, if the body is impaired. Nature recompenses its own faults, by perfecting one element, to the detriment of another (Adams I: 20). Despite the health issues one might have, Adams describes the body as a mere tent, in which we, as travelers dependent on God's grace and mercy, walk the world. Reaching Heaven is the true aim. There is the freehold or the final resting place for soul and glorified body (Adams I: 27). While on earth, the body is exposed to abuse and suffering. Despite the limits and ailments of the body, the believer is called to serve one's fellow men and to abhor himself (Adams I: 52). There is no hatred involved in such an act, but a mere renunciation towards self and investment in one's neighbor. Also, the be-

3 This paper focuses on the use of these three elements in the first volume of Adams' sermons (see Adams 1861 at <http://archive.org/details/worksofthomasada01adam>).

liever is not called to embellish the body, but to humble it, because, as mentioned before, the body is connected to the soul. If the body is meek and humble, the soul must be healthy, focused on matters of spiritual importance (Adams I: 56).

The material that the body is made of is tackled by Adams, who argues that whenever Jews sinned and later asked for God's forgiveness, they would tear their clothes, and put on a sackcloth, which would then be sprinkled with dust and ashes. The torn clothes showed the Jews' revenge on the things that increased their pride. Clothing would be covering their nakedness and not allow them to see the true meekness they owed to God. The dust and the ashes symbolized their acknowledgement of their real value, namely that it resides only in God, not in themselves and that the dust is the material they were made of as humans. Also, it was a way of humbling themselves before the power of God, who would not collect His rightful glory, had He gone against dust and ashes. Adams references Psalm 30:9, arguing that the dust represents the rightful and just destruction of the body, whereas the ash represents the destruction of the soul. Man deserves both destructions, due to the gravity of sin. If clothes gave man the impression of rising above his meekness and lowly nature, filling him with pride, God's touch brings man down, to the level of the material and mother substance (*materia* and *mater*) from which he was forged. The humbled man acknowledges that his value is not greater than that of the dust he wipes off his shoes. However, such humbling acknowledgement is not meant to destroy man's body or psyche, least of all his soul. Adams point that hope is in Christ the Savior, who replaces man's dust and ash with His merits and His salvation (Adams I: 52-57).

There is a connection between the spiritual realm and the human body, also between man's psyche and his body. For Adams, the Christian concept of liberty is contrasted with what the godless world defines as such. Writing about the security of salvation, Adams observes a reversal in priorities. The saved, who has assurance of eternal peace, will consider the profane man's liberty as deceitful, or "the liberty of darkness". Because God is light, physical darkness cannot contain the freedom of a believer's faith. Since the body is made up of dust, it is weak and sick, yet God gives salvation, the eternal substance, which feeds and strengthens the soul. There is, however, an element that separates the body from the soul, at least for a while.

Adams describes death as the proud Philistine, who marches against God's elect, as the Philistines did in the days of Israel. Death is hideous and it strikes a terrible blow for any man, namely the end of the body's life. If for the profane death has many meanings, for the Christian it bears the meaning of hope, eternal security, certainty of salvation, the passing from the wretched life of sin, where all is temptation and repentance, to a life of

perfect harmony, peace, and love. There is a separation between body and soul, but for the believer the body is not as important as the soul. Despite the terrible blow Death inflicts to the body, Adams considers the believer as the true victor, since his death is not a final moment or act, but a simple passing. He describes the believer as follows: “He dares encounter with this last enemy, trample on him with foot of disdain, and triumphantly sing over him, 1 Cor. xv.55, ‘O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’ He conquers in being conquered; and all because God hath said to his soul, ‘I am thy salvation’” (Adams I: 62).

Adams uses the terms “body” and “flesh” interchangeably. They both have a physical significance, but also a metaphorical one. The “body” usually refers to the anatomical or physical body and only rarely to the fallen nature, whereas “flesh” is almost always used to refer to sinfulness and the fallen nature of man. In this context, “body” has richer and deeper meanings. For Adams salvation of the soul comes through the only Mediator between God and man: Jesus Christ. Adams argues that: “The soul is the perfection of the body, reason of the soul, religion of reason, faith of religion, Christ of faith” (Adams I: 69). The body and the soul are connected to Christ, through faith, in His sacrifice (death and resurrection). Even though the body is supposed to protect the soul, it is the soul that perfects the body.

Also, the body and the soul share an intrinsic communion as one is tied to the other, if one rises, the other follows, but only in regard to the opposition to sin and fulfillment of God’s commands. The falling of the body refers only to physical decay and suffering, which, paradoxically, feed the soul’s strength. The capacity to judge events offers the possibility for the body to protect the soul, when submitted to agonizing pains, because in that physical brokenness and falling, by not giving in to sin, it connects to the soul’s ascension towards God. That is why, in the middle of great illness, some are at peace, while others cannot break the chain of physical and spiritual decay.

When God created man, there was no evil in him. The breath of life, that God breathed onto the lump of clay, had no “poison” or “sin” in it. Adams does not believe that God is the author of sin, but he does not go into such a debate at this point. He believes that sin or the “poison” was poured into man’s heart by the devil. The “poison” is *malitiam*, wickedness. However guilty the devil, Adams argues that man is born corrupt and is guilty of corrupting himself or poisoning his own soul, through his own decisions. Humans do not express their sinful violence from the beginning, because it develops over time. Sin has three degrees, according to Adams: “First, secret sin; an ulcer lying the bones, but skinned over with hypocrisy. Secondly, open sin, bursting forth into manifest villainy. The former is corruption, the second eruption. Thirdly, frequented and confirmed sin, and that is

rank poison, envenoming soul and body” (Adams I: 71). The body is afflicted by the Devil himself, because he hates humankind (Adams I: 82). Therefore, the body is a vehicle for sin and evil acts. All sprout from the corruption of the soul. In this scenario, the body seems to be at the receiving end of sin. Still, there is a noted connection between the inner and the outer or the spiritual and the physical, with a definite involvement of reason.

The body is a recipient of sin, which acts as a poison, corrupting the physical organs. If the organs are considered as seats of various emotional and spiritual and rational characteristics, than it follows that the corrupt heart would be full of falsehood; the head would be light, in the sense of “superficial” or “weak”, not full of light; the eyes would be full of adultery; the tongue would be full of blasphemy; the hands would oppress, and the entire body would be submitted to “intemperance”. Adams points out that the physical organs are mere vehicles of sin. All physical organs have characteristics of their own, but are corrupted by sin. Adams explains, thus, how beauty is corrupted into wantonness, strength into violence, wit into willfulness, learning into dissension, devotion into superstition, and religion into treason. Sin acts as a spreading disease, which never stops until the entire body, soul, and mind are irremediably corrupt (Adams I: 72).

Adams thinks of the “body” also in terms of the body of Christ, namely the church. The body is made up of all believers, living and dead. Adams points to the times when the body was bruised through persecution and death. Great suffering befell the church, when many were killed due to their faith. He is quick to point that the body may suffer, but the most important element, the Head (Christ), cannot be touched or made to suffer because of a sin of His own, because He does not have one. An important aspect is that Christ cannot be killed, in His divine self. Christ is the fountain of all faith. The physical body of the believers may suffer and perish, but their soul cannot be reached by those who destroy the body. Here Adams implies losing one’s salvation through external means. The persecutors cannot reach or affect the spiritual life of a believer, because it is hidden in Christ.

The idea of a distant Christ should be rebuked, since Adams argues that despite His divine power, Christ is not distant or secluded in some corner of Heaven, instead He suffers together with all believers. His explanation is clear: “Saul strikes in earth; Christ suffers in heaven”, an idea based on Acts 9:4, where Christ asks Saul in a vision why does he persecute Him? (Adams I: 81). The suffering goes both ways. If the Christ suffers with the body, in all the body’s forms of suffering; the body also takes on the suffering of Christ, but His sufferings, which cannot be contained by any structure or body, but the benefits of his sufferings and death. The church only suffers in a limited manner, although physical and mental suffering can be excru-

ciating, but it does so, as a result of Christ having won salvation for all who believe. The sufferings of the body of the church are mere copies of Christ's full sufferings. The church cannot do otherwise. If Christ died, and He is the Head of the Church, so will the church. There is, however, a reward for the church's suffering (Adams I: 86).

In the relationship of man and God, the body weighs nothing, in comparison with obedience. Man was created from dust, but he was breathed the breath of life from God. One might assume the body to be precious for the Creator, but it has limited value. It must be taken care of, since it become the Temple of the Spirit. This means that the mind and the soul must not be defiled by the sinful acts of the body. However, when it comes to obedience towards God, the body is not important. Death is not an obstacle for the believer, since God can resurrect the dead and unite the dead body with the soul at the final judgment. Adams quotes 1 Samuel 15:22. "To obey is better than sacrifice." Stripping the body of this kind of importance, does not mean that it loses all importance. The body needs to be sanctified and kept pure. Adams underlines the need to bring the body as a living sacrifice before God, as in Romans 12:1, 2, but this is would be a natural consequence of obedience. Since the limbs of the body are symbols and vehicles through which sin is manifested, it follows that the body needs to be brought before God as a sacrifice, meaning that it would be dedicated to God in its entirety. However, bringing the body alone is not enough. By quoting 1 Corinthians 6:20, the believer understands to bring his entire being, body and soul before God in full obedience. The consequences flow naturally: a gradual and steadfast turning away from sin, a process Adams calls "thy holocaust, thy whole burnt-offering" (Adams, I:102).

Adams looks at the way sin works and how it affects man. He turns to Solomon's thoughts on vice. Before he analyses the example, Adams writes about how God gives his graces freely, while the devil "his junkets falsely" (Adams, I: 221). In Adams' view, the harlot mentioned by Solomon is *vice*, "ugly and deformed vice" (Adams, I:221), which earns the respect and attention due to the embellishments with which it surrounds itself. Vice affects a man's goods, his name, but also his health (Adams I: 223-24), which means sin affects the body. Wisdom is to be practiced with obedience, because it brings health and life (Prov. 4:22). Since sin is the perfect opposite of righteousness, therefore of obedience, it follows that it has the opposite effects on mind, soul, and body. In the words of Solomon, it brings rotteness, or disease to the body. Despite the severity of the sin, and in accordance with 1 Corinthians 6:18, which makes it even more so, Adams sees that God does not punish all sinners at the moment they sin. They seem to enjoy good health and even be quite rich, as in Psalm 73:4, 5, 7, or even reach old age. God "suffers" them, for the time being. Yet, these sins are not without

consequence, since Adams assures his readers that God does punish them through some terrible disease, or simply “puts out their candle”, death being one of the consequences. According to Adams, there is a correlation between sickness and sin, on the one hand, and weakness and wickedness, on the other. The body suffers what the soul lives and the mind thinks. Even if the body is in perfect health, sin can corrupt the mind and the soul to the degree that by desiring and acting on lust, the body begins to fail. Adams concludes this part of his sermon by writing: “All diseases are God’s real sermons from heaven, whereby he accuseth and punisheth man for his sins” (Adams I: 225). His idea does not mean that disease is the direct consequence of sin, but sickness is a sign that prompts investigation. Besides, even if all nations have their specific sins, Adams believes that vice is the universal sin, that all nations and all men have (Adams I: 225).

The consequence of sin is death. Adams presents this dire situation by arguing that there are three deaths. The first one is physical, the second is spiritual, and the third one is eternal. He places the three deaths in the context of the “tempted”, who are considered “dead”. The first death occurs when the body dies, the second when the soul forsakes, but it is also forsaken of grace, while the third death is when both body and soul are thrown into hell. He goes to great lengths to explain all three types of death, especially when the “body” is involved in two of them. When the first death occurs, the body is separated from the soul. When the second death occurs, the soul and the body are separated from grace. The third death is when the body and the soul are separated from eternal happiness. From this later description, the body can be included in all three deaths. The tragedy that Adams observes is that, in truth, man cannot be complete neither on earth, nor in eternity, because of sin. According to Adams, there are two realms in which man can live, namely earth and either heaven or hell. Sin, the harlot, as Adams describes it, has the capacity to deprive man of the joy of truly living both on earth, and in the afterlife (Adams I: 226).

In Adams’ thought, the body has no life apart from the soul, meaning that the soul is life. The body dies when the soul leaves it, or when the union is broken. Without the soul, the body is simply “without action, motion, sense”. The death of the body is the first death, but not the worst, that sin brings upon a person. Although, Adams argues that the person, as a whole, is in dissolution when the body is separated from the soul. Besides the many Bible verses Adams quotes, the most relevant is God’s warning for Adam and Eve, or for man, when He tells them that if they eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *that very day* they will die. When man sinned for the first time, death took hold of him. There was no immediate death for the body, but a “fall into a languishing and incurable consumption” did occur, and it ends when the body dies. Adams explains that death is not a

mere separation of body and soul, but also a steadfast work of the “agents of death”, namely mortality, mutability, misery, yea, by sorrow and pain” (Adams I: 226).

Adams’ judgment on the body is both harsh and optimistic, when he writes: “The body is the disease, the grave, the destiny, the necessity, and the burden of the soul” (Adams I: 227). If the sinful receive the punishment of death, the believers, those united in and with Christ, will have the same death, but it becomes a mere instrument for passing from life to the best life, or, as Adams describes it “a bridge over the tempestuous sea to paradise”. As before, man has a genesis, a beginning, a time and a place of origin, and for the faithful, death becomes their exodus, the passing from evil and wickedness to life eternal. This brings Adams to the second death, namely the separation of the body and soul from the grace of God (Adams I: 228).

The death of the soul is labelled as spiritual death. However, it’s not a death like that of the body, where motion and action are lacking. It is rather the loss of God’s truth and grace. The soul retains understanding and will, which cannot be lost even in hell. An important aspect, though, is that Adams refers to the soul with the feminine pronoun (her). This is one of the instances, where his view on the soul as feminine, is identical with that of the New England Puritans, described by Elizabeth Reis. When spiritually dead, the soul has no light of faith to direct “her” towards the truth, and no strength of love to guide towards goodness. Sin is the cause of the soul’s death, and the separation between God and soul is labelled as *mors animae* (Adams I: 228).

Following Adams’ train of thought, we arrive at the point where he argues that even the believers have three kinds of death within themselves, which are the opposite of the death found in the non-believers. First, the believers are dead to sin. Second, they are dead to the law. Third, they are dead to the world, both passively and actively. Death towards sin implies *mortification* or putting one’s lusts to death. Mortification is a process, and it increases the death towards the lusts, thus increasing one’s death towards sin. Adams describes this death in two word plays: “The faithful are dead to sin, the faithless are dead in sin” and “By overcoming himself, he is overcome of himself” (*Vincendo se, vincitur a se*, see Adams I: 228) In a twist of logic, the more war rages against sin, in one’s own being, the more peace the believer receives, or, as Adams writes it: “This war makes our peace” (Adams I: 228). Both life and death are brought into the believer by Christ’s work, who defeated sin. The mortification of one’s sins has the result of defeating concupiscence, which in turn revives the conscience. Adams is well aware of the problem of lusts in the “new man”. They wreak havoc for mind, body, and soul. Yet, victory is not the lack of lusts, because they will

not cease unless the body dies. Instead, the victory over sin implies the control of lusts, to such an extent that they do not do harm anymore (Adams I: 229).

The second death of the believer is towards the law. Beginning with Galatians 2:19, Adams makes clear separation between the ceremonial law, which he condemns, and the moral law, which he upholds. He criticizes the Catholic church for upholding the ceremonial law, to the detriment of the moral law. He describes the effect of the moral law as a mortal law for any man. The death towards the law, does not mean that the law is not in place or that it does not condemn anymore. The moral law remains as valid as when it was first given. The moral law applies to any human being. The difference is in the effect of Christ's death and resurrection, which removes the condemnation that comes through the law. Between man and law stands Christ. He took the blame and the effect, but rose victorious, thus canceling the effect on man. The result is that the believer, in Christ, is not under, but alive over it (Adams I: 229).

The third death has two sides, the active and the passive. The first shows the world as dead unto the believers, whereas the second indicates the believers who are dead to the world. The active death is a rejection of carnal joys, which come in a variety of vanities. There cannot be any fulfilling worldly pleasure for a believer, since such a devotion would put him at odds with God's values. Yet, the rejection of carnal joys, does not entail a rejection of joy altogether. The believer places value on the soul, not the world, interpreted as an object of pleasure and lust, therefore there must be moral consistency, in order for the believer to have and enjoy the pleasure of holiness. These pleasures are contrary to one another. The world is not secondary to Christ, but contrary to him. Still, the world is the place where man settles the issue of his eternity. This problem is settled through the passive death of the believer towards the world. Renouncing the world's pleasures, not the world itself, comes with a reaction from it, by which the believers are labelled as dirt, outsiders, worthy of condemnation.

The history of persecution has made this point in history. However, as Adams points out, victory over the world's lusts is not a result of man's faith, but of Christ's work. The joy of finding meaning and spiritual depth in Christ, is due to Him, not to us. Adams turns to 1 John 5:4 and Galatians 6:14 to underscore the relation of Christ to believers, and so that believers might rejoice in their "deaths", because these are good and desirable deaths. By contrasting the life in Christ to the death in the world's pleasures, Adams points out that the knowledge of the Savior will make the believer even more conscious of the devil's traps. First, the devil makes a heart become even more hardened. Second, he favors and upholds evil purposes. Third, he makes the believer think he needs no assistance from the Spirit.

One of the biggest dangers for a believer is not sin by itself, but a custom of sinfulness. Customs are hard to break. Adams believes that temptation is the first step, which assaults the heart, but it goes further by acting on sin. The pattern begins to be shaped into a custom. Once a sin is accomplished, the heart is sickened, followed by a slow, gradual death in the delight of sin, and, last, it is buried in sin through the formed custom (Adams I: 230-31).

Regardless of how sinful the soul is and how corrupt the body is, Adams places hope for life eternal solely on the merits and ministry of Christ. In his *Heaven Made Sure* (Sermon V, based on Psalm 35), he uses various Old Testament verses to show how Christ is the sole savior of man from the death of sin. He accomplishes this by asking four “circumstances”: who, what, to whom, when. The “who” is the answer for the source of salvation, namely, the Lord. The “what” answers the question about the result of Christ’s work, which is salvation. Despite the many things men possess on earth, none of these possessions can buy salvation or a means to bypass it. The reason for this impossible feat is the nature of Christ, fully God and fully man. The chasm caused by sin, between God and man, can be bridged only by Christ’s atoning sacrifice. “To whom” refers to the recipient of salvation, namely the believer. Salvation is not corporate, and Adams emphasizes this by repeating twice that salvation is “mine”, not ours. From what Adams writes, there was a common belief that most people would go to Heaven – an idea clearly rejected by Adams. The “when” answers the time of salvation. It is always a “now”, not a “yesterday” or a “tomorrow”. Adams argues for the “now” based on God’s definition of Himself: I am. The present is the time of God’s action in man’s life (Adams I: 69-70).

### **Conclusions**

For the Puritans the body had an important place in the relation between God and man, but also for the relations with man’s neighbor. The body was considered both weak and strong, depending on how the mind and the soul related to the teachings of Scripture. If the mind took heed and followed God’s commands, out of love and genuine faith, the body would be stronger in relation to temptations. There was no time for retirement for the soul, since the body was always submitted to various and continuous temptations. Even if the body grew stronger and ever more able to withstand temptations, the soul would have to be always on its guard, because it couldn’t count on the body’s capacity to stay pure on its own.

Ironically, the body is, at the same time, the traitor and the guardian of the soul. It’s a traitor because it would always give in to sin, but it’s a guardian, because if the soul is at work, the body follows. Apparently, the body’s capacity to stay away from sin is nonexistent without the soul’s input. By soul we must understand also reason, not that they are one and the same,

but they are connected. The soul gives life to the body, but the mind is part of the body, not the soul. Reason can go both ways, yet it apparently goes way better with the soul, once prompted by faith. The body is a mere vessel, but a troublesome one. It constantly conspires with the enemy. It is easily subdued by temptations. It falls prey to false arguments. It ends up sinning and causing an entire world of distress to the mind and the soul.

Yet, the human being, from a Christian perspective, is both body and soul. The body cannot be without the soul, just as the soul cannot be without the body, while the body is alive. Puritans believed that the soul is the life of the body, just as God is the life of the soul. Once the soul departs the body, the later dies, while the former goes beyond, either into hell or heaven. Furthermore, the situation of the soul after the body dies needs to be settled before death, not after, namely, when the body is still united with the soul. This is the reason why, from a Puritan perspective, the devout Christian must keep the body in submission to the soul at all cost. It was of paramount importance that the body be wholly and completely under the guidance of the soul, while the soul was under the guidance of God.

Therefore, the body is considered weak, but with great potential if properly placed under the guidance of the soul. The collaboration of the two leads to a proper saintly life, lived in accordance with the precepts of God. In this case, once death takes place, the soul would be safe in the presence of God. Salvation is not merit based and there is no place where puritans considered entering heaven merely a matter of perfect, but mechanical, submission to God. Instead, the harmony of body and soul is the result of Christ's work, not the efforts of man. Sanctification may very well be a ministry in which man takes part and acts in accordance to Christ's commands, but he is in no way meriting his salvation.

Puritanism depicted quite vividly man's journey through a decrepit and corrupt life. The effects of this tormented journey were twofold: heaven or hell. The reason for their many written works, which were in great part their sermons delivered to the congregations, was to save souls. In order to achieve results, the Puritans made great efforts to paint reality and theology in such a way as to create a movement of mind and body. Their voices still resonate after almost four hundred years. Their sermons still ring a bell and touch a chord in a readers' mind and soul, because the problem of sin is not culturally contextualized, but it is a universal and timeless issue. Thomas Adams was a master of words, a stylish, yet deep thinker. His sermons and advice are still relevant in their understanding of human nature. Puritans may have faded in history, but their works inspire a deeper knowledge of self and fellow man, as well as the Creator, and His plans of salvation. The final destiny of man is of paramount importance to all Puritan divines, which is the reason they emphasized the importance of both body and soul.

The connection needed to be clear, because an overemphasis on any of them, would have created issues in understanding creation, redemption, and sanctification.

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