Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

205 The Boy Jesus (*Puer Jesus*)

The Boy. Jesus conveniently is called a boy. For a boy is truthful, guileless, pure, cheerful. So, I find in Christ. In Christ [we find] infallible truth, overwhelming guilelessness, purity that cannot be defiled, unending cheerfulness. By truthfulness falsity is excluded, by guilelessness wickedness, by purity indecency, by cheerfulness melancholy.

¶ It is even said that Jesus was a boy because of truth in speech and judgment. Wherefore he is designated through Daniel who is interpreted judging before God, Dan. 13[:45]: “Jesus raised up the holy spirit of a young boy,” etc.

¶ Second, Jesus is said to be a boy by reason of guilelessness, in whom there is no wickedness. Wherefore also he is designated through peaceful Solomon who said, [3] Kings 3[:7]: “I am but a child, and know not how to come in.” And in how much guilelessness Jesus the boy scarcely would be, is evident in Luke 2[:43, 51]: “The child Jesus remained in Jerusalem,” etc., after three days, it follows, “and was subject to them.”

¶ Third, Jesus is said to be a boy by reason purity and cleanness. Wherefore also Samuel designates him, [1] Kings 2[:18]: “Being a child girded with a linen ephod.” In which purity is designated, which is required in boys according to that of Dan. 1[:7-8], the king spoke with a proposal of eunuchs that he might introduce boys in whom there is no stain. In a sign of which

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this boy is found in the temple and in the middle of the teachers, [Luke 2:46].

¶ Fourth, Jesus is said to be a boy by reason of cheerfulness. For boys are accustomed to be cheerful naturally because of which Abner said to Joab by [2] Kings 2[:14]: “Let the young men rise and play before us.” There Jesus can be designated by Isaac who is interpreted as laughter or joy. Therefore Luke 2[:40]: “And the child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom.” This boy is delicate in his members, [1] Paral. 22[:5]: “Solomon my son is very young and tender.”

¶ Again, a boy is commended on account of ingenuity in intellect, Wis. 8[:19]: “I was a witty child.” Because of the beauty of his face, Matt. 12[:18]: “Behold my servant, whom I have chosen.” Because of utility in working, Isai. [11:6]: “A little child shall lead them.”

¶ Again, boys are accustomed to have darkness or obtuseness in understanding, timidity in undertaking, mutability in moods.

¶ Concerning the first, [1] Kings 30[:13]: “I am a young man of Egypt,” that is, dark on account of the darkness of ignorance. For “Folly is bound up in the heart of a child,” Prov. 22[:15].

¶ Concerning the second, Judges 8[:20]: “He was afraid, being but yet a boy.”

Concerning the third, [3] Kings 14[:12]: “When your feet shall be entering into Jerusalem, the child shall die.”

¶ Concerning the fourth [3 Kings] 19[:3]: “He left his servant there.”

¶ Against these matters it is said concerning someone, Tob. 1[:4]: “When he was younger than any, yet he did no childish thing in his work.” Wherefore concerning someone, Luke 1[:76] it is said, “You,” singularly before others, “child,” from spiritual privilege, in boyhood it is very often shown, “a prophet,” even more than a prophet not of such a kind, but “of the highest.” Not only will you be in secret, but “you shall be called” in public. Wherefore also he is commended by singularity of purity, “you, child,” by an utterableness of truth, “the prophet” by the dignity of his Lord, “the highest,” by the clarity of the name, “you will be called.”

¶ Again any Christian ought to be a child as for the boyish habits which Christ took on for us. First is purity. Wherefore a boy (*puer*) is called as if pure air (*purus aer*) and this ought to be in his heart, James 4[:8]: “Purify your hearts, you double minded.” In his mouth, Prov. 15[:26]: “Pure words are most beautiful.” For those words are pure which are brought forth without lying, Wis. 1[:11]: “The mouth that lies, kills the soul.” He is purer who speaks without harming his neighbor, Prov. 13[:13]: “Whosoever speaks ill, binds himself for the time to come.” But the most beautiful

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is he who speaks without affront and swearing, Eccli. 23[:12]: “A man that swears much, shall be filled with iniquity.”

¶ The second property of the boy is truth. For commonly it is said,[[1]](#endnote-1) from a boy, a fool, and a drunkard every truth is extorted. But this property Christ had, John [14:6]: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

¶ Third is forgetfulness of injury, because he does not strike back, and is quickly placated. Thus, we are admonished, Rom. 12[:19]: “Revenge not yourselves, my dearly beloved.” This is against the wrathful who seek vindication.

¶ Fourth they are not embarrassed for their nakedness, Isai. 20[:3]: “My servant has walked naked.” Such ones were the apostles, John 21[:5] “Children, have you any meat?”

¶ Fifth the exhibition of liberality. So, Christ who gave to everyone and did not marry. So, ought the just man, Tob. 4[:9]: “If you have much give abundantly.” But alas because old men by the habits of a boy freely give of their bread to dogs, not of Christ for the poor, concerning whom a pack of dogs unfed at table, not if we exclude the less and poor of Christ.

¶ Sixth in a boy is agility. Therefore, Christ agilely descended from heaven and subject himself to the cross.

¶ Therefore also we must work while it is day.

1. Cf. “An Edition of a Fifteenth Century Middle English Temporale Sermon Cycle,” ed. Ruth Evans, sermo 7.194-202 (2:147): The preacher now moves on to the second property of a child which every righteous man should have. Nicholas: ".2a • est propter veritatem, quia puer verax est, vnde vulgariter dicitur, A stulto, ab ebrio, et a puero extorquetur veritas. [489827\_vol.2.pdf (whiterose.ac.uk)](https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/21101/2/489827_vol.2.pdf) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)