

Saint Ephrem

The Prophet of the Syrians and the Ascetic Poet

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St. Ephrem A.D. 303-373
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Church Fathers and Scholars: Evaluation and Praise of St. Ephrem

Since the 4th century A.D. and until the present time, St. Ephrem's reputation and fame, as a renowned writer, never ceased or diminished. His contemporaries and later distinguished Western as well as Eastern Church fathers and scholars attested to his poetic genius and prolific literary contributions. In the 20th century and especially in the last thirty or some years, St. Ephrem, as a poet-theologian, has continued to grow in stature and recognition, thanks to scholars like Dom Edmond Beck, O.S.B.; Sebastian Brock, Kathleen McVey; Fr. Robert Murray and others.

St. Jerome, the Latin father, writes in his Book on Famous Men, in A.D. 392, about St. Ephrem's "lofty intellect": "Ephrem, a deacon of the church of Edessa wrote a great deal in the Syriac language. He attained such distinction that his writings are read in some churches after the scriptural lections. I have read a work of his on the Holy Spirit, which someone had translated from Syriac into Greek, and even in translation I could recognize the acumen of a lofty intellect." [1]

Palladius also wrote about St. Ephrem's saintliness in his Lausiaca History (419/20), chapter 40, paragraph 1 and 3, the following:

"This Ephrem is one of the saints who is worthy of mention. He journeyed excellently and uprightly along the spiritual path, never turning to either side from the straight path... "

Palladius goes on to tell us a lot about St. Ephrem's prolific writings:

"It is said of him that when he was a boy, he saw a dream- or a vision - in which a vine shoot sprung up from his tongue; it grew and everywhere under the heavens was filled by it; it bore bunches of grapes in proliferation, and all the birds of the sky came and ate of its fruits; the more they ate, the more the bunches multiplied and grew." [2]

Sozomen, in his Ecclesiastical History, talks laudably and glowingly about him:

"Ephrem the Syrian was entitled to the highest honors and was the greatest ornament of the catholic (universal) church... His style of writing was so filled with

splendid oratory and with richness and temperateness of thought that he surpassed the most approved writers of Greece ... It is said that he wrote 300,000 verses." [3]

Sebastian Brock ranks him among the greatest theologian poets of Christendom. St. Ephrem, he says is "a religious poet of quite outstanding stature, one who deserves to rank alongside the greatest theologian poets in the Christian tradition." [4] Sebastian Brock goes on to add and admire St. Ephrem's skill and ability, in Hymns on Paradise, who "is able to weave a profound theological synthesis organized around a particular Biblical narrative, in this case, Genesis Chapter 2 and 3." [5]

Kathleen McVey mentions that St. Ephrem "played a major role in the development of both Byzantine hymnography and Western medieval drama." [6]

J.B. Segal singles out St. Ephrem's superior standing and greatness among the Syrian fathers; by saying he is "the outstanding personality of the 4th century at Edessa and the most celebrated father of the Syrian church." [7]

Alfred Einstein, in his book, A Short History of Music, recognized an obvious and direct link between Syrian hymnal music and Western Gregorian chanting. He says that St. Ephrem's hymns, like Hellenistic church hymns, had an impact on St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (d. 397) who recognized, as a musicologist poet, the change in these hymns from "classical quantitative prosody to modern scansion by accent." [8]

St. Ephrem: Life and Christian Background

Western, as well as Eastern scholars, differs on the time of St. Ephrem's birth and origin. Some claim he was born in Nisibis in A.D. 306 [9], a Christian, as he himself proudly proclaims, contrary to the wrong assertions of many Western scholars who claim that he was born to a pagan family. In his Hymns against the Heresies XXV, he says the following:

"These two things belong to our Lord: the time when I was to enter into the created world and when it will be beneficial for me to leave it. I was born in the path of truth even though my childhood was unaware, but once I grew aware I acquired it in the furnace." [10]

And in Hymns on Virginity XXX VII: 10-13, he adds:

"Your Truth [was] in my youth; Your Verity [is] in my old age. I rejected and expelled the party of the crucifiers; I scorned graven images and the metal of strange [gods]." [11]

St. Ephrem served as a deacon under St. Jacob of Nisibis (A.D. 338+), who appointed him as a teacher. He also served under three other bishops, Babu (A.D. 338-50); Volageses (A.D. 350-361) and Abraham (A.D. 361). St. Ephrem taught in Nisibis for 38 years in the school St. Jacob established. St. Ephrem refused to be elevated "to high ecclesiastical office." [12]

In Nisibis, St. Ephrem composed profound hymns like *Carmina Nisibina*, Hymns on Paradise and Hymns Against Heretics and others. Then, he moved to Amida (Diar Bakr) in A.D. 363 for a short period of time and then to Edessa (Orfa) where he taught and composed some of his writings for 10 years. In Edessa, he wrote his Hymns against Heresies: Manicheans, Arians, Marcionites, Bardaisanites and Polemical Tracts. He also taught young women to sing in choirs to counter the appealing but seductive hymns of the heretic Bar Daisan. [13]

Before his death on June 9, A.D. 373, St. Ephrem asked to be buried with the graves of the destitute and the criminals. Among his disciples, a few names are worth of mention: Abbas, Zenobius, Abraham, Maras and Simeon. Alas, Paulonas and Aranad deviated: from sound orthodox

St. Ephrem: The Profound and Prolific Poet

St. Ephrem produced a large body of verse as well as prose works; hymns, homilies and writings against heretical writers and Biblical commentaries on Titian's Diatesseron (Harmony of The Four Gospels). His hymns are superb spiritual insights and inspired statements on the subjects of Paradise, on Nisibis (*Carmina Nisibina*), against heresies, on Virginity, on the church, on Nativity, on Lent and Paschal Season, etc.

St. Ephrem uses poetry as a vehicle to express his profound theological views by imagistic and symbolic means. Sebastian Brock aptly and perfectly describes his poetic genius and formidable accomplishments by saying that "his (Ephrem's) theological vision, as expressed in his hymns has a freshness and immediacy to day that few other theological works from the early Christian period can hope to achieve." [14]

The Sieges of Nisibis: AD. 337-50 (Carmina Nisibina)

In the first siege of Nisibis A.D. 338, Shapur II was turned back in failure. St. Ephrem attributed the salvation of the city to the saintly Bishop Jacob. Two sieges followed, one in A.D. 346 for three months and the next in A.D. 350 for four months.

In his Carmina Nisibina, St. Ephrem laments the three sieges and comments, in an epic proportion, on the deliverance of Nisibis, which is likened to Noah's Ark deliverance. (Nisibis speaks:)

Hear and weigh my likeness with Noah
And since my pain is less than his,
May your grace be equal to our salvation,
For my children stand like Noah
Between the wrathful and the destroyers.
Make peace, my Lord, with the besieged,
And cast down before me the besiegers,
To double my victory.

Entreating the Lord, St. Ephrem cries to Him for help and a miracle; for mercy and victory; and for revival and resurrection similar to Christ's Resurrection. (Nisibis continues speaking:)

Since the killer [Shapur II] three times [expressed] his anger,
[Express] three times the mercy of your Third One.
Grant not victory over your beloved to the Evil One,
Whose avarice you [defeated] twice and three times.
Allow my victory to fly over the whole world
To acquire glory for you in the whole world
He who was revived the Third [Day]
Put me not to death in the Third [Trial] (15)

In the third siege, A.D. 350, Shapur II was defeated, although he managed to break through the fortified wall of Nisibis. The inhabitants rebuilt the wall and Shapur's army retreated and his elephants were overwhelmed and stung by insects and fell foundering in the mud.

Then, St. Ephrem finally writes of victory, salvation and life which are the fruits of faith and God's grace:

He saved us without a wall and taught that He is our Wall
He saved us without a king and made known that He is our King.
He saved us in all from all and showed He is All.
He saved us by His grace and again revealed
That He is freely gracious and life-giving. From each who boasts
He takes away the boast and gives to him His grace. (16)

St. Ephrem anticipated the reader's question: Why did God allow Nisibis to be besieged and suffer? He answers back in a poetic and prophetic tone reminiscent of the Jewish prophet warnings and indictments. St. Ephrem "justifies the ways of God to man" by saying: Nisibis' sad destiny, destruction and suffering are tied to the apostate Christian Roman Emperor, Julian, who perpetrated pagan worship together with Nisibis inhabitants:

Who else has so multiplied altars?
Who else has so honored all the evil spirits?
Who else has so pleased the demons?
He angered only the One, and he was broken.
In him was confuted the entire faction of wrongs
A force unable to support its worshippers. (17)

In the city of Edessa and during the spread of the great hunger in the years AD. 372-373, a very interesting and fascinating picture of St. Ephrem emerges as an earlier "Red Cross Worker"; and according to Evagrius' account, as "a hostel manager," caring for the injured, the hungry and the dying. Florence Nightingale and Mother Theresa would be thrilled and delighted with such an exemplary caring and saintly worker and master who preceded them by sixteen hundred years.

"Having received some money," Evagrius goes on to mention, "he [Ephrem] began to shut off suitable areas in the streets and saw to the provision of three hundred beds; some of these were to be used for burying those who had died; while other were for those who still had some hope of life to lie upon. Furthermore, he also had all those suffering from starvation in the villages, brought in and given beds. He spent every day in constant attendance on them, seeing to their every need with great caring, making use of the means available to him. This he did joyfully with the help of those whom he had asked to assist in the matter." (18)

St. Ephrem and Dante Aligieri: A Comparison

Father Robert Munitz calls St. Ephrem, a Dante (AD. 1321+) and the resemblance and likeness adds a great deal of prestige and honor to the prophetic Syrian Father. Dante of course ranks among the greatest writers and poets of the world. T .S. Elliot, the American Poet Laureate and Nobel Prize winner says "Dante and Shakespeare divide the modern world between them, there is no third." On the other hand, St. Ephrem preceded Dante by a thousand years and belonged to the Golden Age of the Syrian literature and fathers. Sozomen said, "He [Ephrem] was the greatest ornament of the catholic (universal) Church."

St. Ephrem's writings were translated into Greek right after his death. They were read by Western and Greek historians and fathers like St. Jerome, Palladius, Sozomen, Gennadius, Evagrius and others. Dante was familiar with these classical authors. (19) It is very possible that Dante read St. Ephrem's Hymns on Paradise and other hymns and that he was moved and inspired by them. Is it coincidental that St. Ephrem's Paradise and Dante's Inferno are circular?

We should look upon Paradise
As being circular too,
Having both sea and dry land
Encompassed within it. (20)

In Dante's Inferno, the sinners suffer in darkness while in St. Ephrem's Paradise the saints rejoice putting on the robe of glory:

Among the saints none is naked
For they have on glory
Nor is any clad in those leaves
Or standing in shame
For they have found, through our Lord
The robe that belongs to Adam and Eve. (21)

Moreover St. Ephrem, a thousand years earlier, discusses the possibilities of a "place" or purgatory between heaven and hell; an "intermediary position for repentant sinners,"

Blessed the sinner
Who has received mercy there
And is deemed worthy to be given access

To the environs of Paradise;
Even though he remains outside,
He may pasture there through grace.
As I reflected I was fearful again
Because that presumed
To suppose that there might be
Between the Garden and Hell's fire
A place where those who have found mercy
Can receive chastisements and forgiveness. (22)

In these verses, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise are mentioned anticipating Dante's celebrated Trilogy.

The Concept of the God-man and Apotheosis

St. Ephrem marvels at God's intervention in the scheme of human events. How could God condescend to our human level and how could the human be elevated so high? Yet God who is so omnipotent and omnipresent, dwells in the small womb of the Virgin Mary:

The power that governs all dwelt in a small womb
While dwelling there, He was holding the reins of the universe.

St. Ephrem wonders at the mystery of the Incarnation and how Mary's womb becomes that small and confined receptacle to the Holy, Infinite, and God of All:

How indeed did that small womb of Mary suffice for Him? It is a wonder if [anything] sufficed for Him. (23)

And once God dwells in the womb of the Virgin an irreversible process takes place: God becomes human. And once God puts on the flesh, mankind is elevated to the level of the divine. This status bestowed upon humanity, through God's grace, is called in Greek "apotheosis."

Today the Deity imprinted itself on humanity,
So that humanity might also be cut into the seal of Deity. (24)

After the Fall, mankind lost the Divine Image (Imago Dei). And so God had to intervene and redeem that holy and divine image bestowed on Adam and Eve in

Paradise. And like in Greek mythology, the winged "Divinity" swiftly flies to the help of mankind and raises it toward Himself, giving him the power to be "a god:"

Divinity flew down
To rescue and lift up humanity.
Behold the Son adorned the servant flaw,
So that He became God as He had desired. (25)

Divinization of mankind (apotheosis), Sebastian Brock says, is not a Hellenistic concept and it has not influenced the writings of St. Ephrem. It, rather, has its background and origin in "Semitic and Biblical" sources:

He gave us divinity.
We gave Him humanity. (26)

St. Ephrem is indeed a skillful poet and creative artist. Like a Raphael, he painstakingly, marvelously, and beautifully paints the perfect picture of "The God-man" and as John Milton says, "The Human Face Divine,"

Glorious is The Wise One who allied and joined
Divinity with humanity,
One from the height and the other from below.
He mingled the natures like pigments
And an image came into being: The God-man. (27)

St Ephrem and Heretics

St. Ephrem was a true champion and zealous protector of the Christian faith. Given his solid Christian background, formidable faith and powerful pen, he rose to defend Christ and Christianity from the onslaughts of pagan, Jewish, and Christian heretics like Marcion, Bardaisan, Mani, and the Christian Emperor Julian and others. These heretics and apostates held erroneous doctrinal views concerning Christ and His Holy Mother, the Virgin Mary. Julian was the apostate type and his defeat and death at the hands of the Persians serve as a lesson to all apostates and heretics who oppose God. If heretics and heresies are "wild animals" ready to devour the Christian faithful, then St. Ephrem, as St. Jacob of Sarugh says, is:

A sheepdog guarding the sheep of God's household,
building for them a sheepfold out of his poems and hymns,

so that, within their safety, he might guard the sheep from storms, at the same time he scatters, by means of his compelling songs, the heresies that rave around like wild animals outside. (28)

Bardaisan's poems and hymns were appealing to the young and St. Ephrem formed choirs of young women to counter their seductive contents and "the dirt of the wiles of Bardaisan." Heretics are all the same. One is as foul and as bad as the others, "We have not come to stir up now the mire of Bardaisan, for the foulness of Mani is quite sufficient. For behold our tongue is very eager to conclude at once and flee from him." (29)

On September 1, 1993, the Sixth International Congress of Syriac Studies was held in Cambridge University, Cambridge, England, Professor H.J.W. Dryvers wrote and delivered a paper titled "The Syriac Romance of Julian the Apostate: Original Language and Place of Origin." I wrote the following, criticizing him. (30) Professor Dryvers attributed racist and anti-Semitic remarks to St. Ephrem who in reality sang, in his Hymns on Paradise, the praises of the Jewish ancestry of Jesus and lauded the virtues of the prophets of the Old Testament. Dr. Sebastian Brock says in his introduction to Hymns on Paradise on page 40, "St. Ephrem's mode of theological discussion, essentially biblical and Semitic in character. . ." He also says on page 41, "On a number of occasions, St. Ephrem speaks of the natural world and the Bible as God's two witnesses." Moreover, St. Ephrem was inspired by The Holy Bible and by Jewish names like Moses, "Master of the Hebrews," and by Aaron, his brother. Dr. Kathleen McVey, in her introduction to Ephrem the Syrian, in *Carmina Nisibina* and in Hymns against Julian, on page 23 says that "Ephrem shows himself to be a genuine heir to the Jewish prophetic tradition."

How could then, Dryvers allege that St. Ephrem was anti-Jewish? As a matter of fact, St. Ephrem was anti any apostates, be they Christian, Jewish, or pagan - who undermined Christ's Divinity and Christian dogma.

St. Ephrem - The Active Ascetic

St. Jacob of Sarugh speaks of St. Ephrem as being a perfect saint. He (Ephrem) was not only a teacher and a poet but also an ascetic and thus the label active ascetic perfectly is applied on him "... He did not teach through the toil of speech but he manifested in his own person the activity of perfect sainthood." (31) Sebastian Brock reaches the conclusion by saying that St. Ephrem was an *Ihidoyo*, meaning "single, celibate, singular, single-minded, follower of Christ," belonging to a "proto-monasticism which the term *Ihidoyo* ideally represent and not to Egyptian form of monasticism. (32)

Kathleen McVey also says that St. Ephrem did not belong to any brand of monastic orders or that he was himself a hermit or a member of a community - however, he was an admirer of ascetic life. (33)

J. B. Segal says that St. Ephrem abandoned city life and retreated to a cave in the hills surrounding Edessa and that he gained the reputation of being called a hermit. He (Ephrem) also encouraged hermits "to live in solitude, in faith and prayer, like Jesus in the wilderness, without fear of wild beasts or hunger". They would not 'be soiled by the sinful mire of the town' for they had 'cast off... the yoke of the world and the tyranny of possessions'. Quoting Saint Ephrem's biographer, J. B. Segal excerpts the following: Ephraim;

"ate no food but barley and dry pulse and occasionally vegetables; his drink was water. His body was dried on his bones like a potter's vessel. His clothes were of the many-colored rags of the dust heap. He was short in stature. He was sad at all times, and he did not indulge in laughter at all. He was bald and beardless." (34)

St. Ephrem was an active ascetic. He was a saint, a solitary and a hermit. But, at the same time, he mingled with people and taught in the schools of Nisibis and Edessa; formed choirs of young women to counter the heretics and heresies and composed superb and sublime hymns and lived an ascetic life. A poem "Frequently I Was Hungry" describes his deep spirituality and profound asceticism.

Frequently I Was Hungry - A Poem (35)

To St. Ephrem, fasting and prayers are essential virtues and observances, every Christian believer must adorn himself/herself with and practice. Fasting and prayer prepare us for the Paradise which we long to attend and yearn for.

The human nature is afflicted with a hunger drive and St. Ephrem has a mind set on fighting his bodily need and desire for food and abstains from consuming it so that he may attain spiritual happiness and not physical satisfaction.

Frequently I was hungry
Because my nature demanded food.
But I refused to eat that I might be worthy
Of that happiness which is kept for those who fast.

If water refreshes and softens the body, St. Ephrem would rather restrict and shut its flow in his mortal body and allow it to dry up and wither so that his soul may rejoice in "the drizzle of Paradise."

My earthly body urged me
to drink water. I left it dry
that it might go rejoicing
in the drizzle of Paradise.

St. Ephrem spent his life in meditation, worship and prayers. These spiritual exercises are the hallmarks of hermits and ascetics. And realizing his physical weakness and "worldly desires," he is constantly vigilant and praying, anticipating death,

Because of my desires
which were many at all times;
I constantly stole from childhood and age
a few days to meditate till the end.

Realizing that death visits mankind like a thief, he is daily watching and praying expecting the dreadful visitor. And with the thoughts of death on his mind, he ceaselessly is worshipping the Lord,

I would think in the morning
That at night I should die.
Then as one who will die
I worshipped without stopping all day.

My thoughts in the night were
"I won't be alive tomorrow."
And until dawn I worshipped
sincerely, uttering prayers.

The ascetic St. Ephrem constantly and deliriously is uttering prayers and worshipping. His whole being is dedicated to the Lord, so much so, that he turns himself into "a church" upon whose altar he sacrifices himself "like an unblemished lamb."

I made of myself a church of the Christ
Within which I offered

Perfume and incense
The work of my members

My thought became an altar
My will a priest
And like an unblemished lamb
I sacrificed myself as an offering.

St. Ephrem is aware of the rules of the ascetic game. An ascetic does not use oil or aromatics to anoint his body, because The Holy Oil of Baptism is the right ointment and substitute. It is "The Oil of The Holy Spirit.

I was serious. I didn't anoint myself
Because I was anointed
Once in Baptism
By The Oil of The Holy Spirit.

Moreover, he shuns bathing in water, an occasional ritual human beings indulge in. His soul rather seeks the water that ran out of the Lord's side on The Holy Cross. Jesus' wounded side is his source - the source of his consolation and inspiration. And that holy and miraculous water cleanses his body and soul.

I shrank from bathing in water
Because I had bathed in the water
Which ran out from
Our Lord's side on the Cross.

Another rule for an ascetic and for every Christian believer is the Holy Eucharist. Here St. Ephrem uses fire as a double metaphor, one constructive and the other destructive. The constructive fire of the Holy Eucharist is so powerful that it consumes and destroys "the weeds" (sin) of his body. The other fire, is the fire of sin which is destructive and is being waged within our beings. This destructive fire is extinguished "By the Blood of God." The Holy Eucharist protects its receivers from evil caused by the devil.

Whenever I received the Fire
Of the Eucharist
It was my prayer that it should
Burn the weeds of my members

Brethren, the fire which had settled
In my members, I have extinguished its flame
By the Blood of God
So that it may not burn my person

The Body of God which I received
In the Sanctuary
Protected my person from all the evil
Caused by the devil who fought with me

The devil is continuously lurking to tempt and to trap the ascetics and the believers alike. As a matter of fact, the devil appears in beautiful human forms to seduce mankind.

In the Medieval times and in the stories of the saints and the ascetics, the devil appeared as a beautiful woman (Succubus) to seduce the heterosexual people and as a beautiful young man (Incubus) to seduce the homosexual people. Therefore the chastity of everyone is vulnerable and the devil can easily rob us of it.

Crossing one's self in the name of the Holy Trinity is a very powerful weapon and means by which we can conquer the Evil One. The sign of the Holy Cross is awesome and it protects and strengthens us, throughout our life, even in old age when the sting of sin will still be activating within our beings:

By night I signed the cross on all my members
In the Three Names
To prevent the devil from coming
And stripping away my chastity

Glory be to Thee
O strength of the Trinity
You have strengthened my old age
For many years, in life's great arena

St. Ephrem is very much mindful of the Lord's Commandment. He steadily and steadfastly observes His Holy Law and its awesome and heavy "yoke." St. Ephrem shoulders this burden 'joyfully' without complaint; he exercises delightfully his spirituality.

From childhood to old age O Lord
I carried your yoke
Joyfully. I worked without ceasing
Every day till the end.

Moreover, St. Ephrem is emboldened and encouraged when he fixes his gaze on the cross and the Lord. Hunger and thirst don't matter to him. If the crucified Christ accepts "myrrh" and "vinegar" instead of water, then he (Ephrem) must forswear and forsake drink. If God receives "vinegar" then he must stay thirsty. It is as simple as that:

The torment of hunger
I vanquished and conquered
For I saw you between the two bandits
Take the myrrh for my sake.

The weariness of thirst
I counted as nothing,
When I saw you on the cross
Drink vinegar in sponge, for my sake.

Moses fasted and his face was illumined when he met God face to face. St. Ephrem would rather emulate the Hebrew prophet and attain such a status reserved for those who fast and are vigilant. But the trauma and the tragedy of the crucifixion makes St. Ephrem pause for a while and ponder the dilemma presented to him. God is naked and he (Ephrem) is clothed. And God's nakedness is very demeaning of the human race. If God condescends and allows Himself to be naked, then Ephrem, the ascetic, has to put on "sackcloth" in shame, humiliation, and self-denial. The poet, prostrate and pensive bemoans a sinister and sinful mankind. He ultimately waits, on Resurrection Day, the Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgment.

Through fast and vigilance
My face became green
So that I may see you on the Day of Resurrection
As the prophet Moses did and be glorified,

I saw you crucified
Naked on the Cross.
Therefore, I put on sackcloth
And lived by hope in You awaiting for Your coming.

The Christian believers who fast will fare well on the Day of the Second Coming of Christ. And St. Ephrem pictures himself as one of the Five Wise Virgins. (36) He is well prepared with the oil of faith, fasting, and prayer. He is well-armed with the armor of the Holy Spirit, Baptism, and the Holy Eucharist. He is vigilant and very eager to be included in the "Royal Wedding" and meet "The Heavenly Bridegroom" and be admitted into the banqueting chamber - into Heaven,

I refused to eat or drink
And pictured before my eyes
The Royal Wedding in Heaven
O Heavenly Bridegroom.

This famous poem contradicts the notion and some scholars who say that St. Ephrem was not an ascetic. This poem is a true mirror and clear representation of his asceticism and spirituality.

We conclude by saying that St. Ephrem renown, fame, and solid reputation are not only intact and standing but rather on the rise and spreading throughout the civilized world. No wonder that even in his time and now, he has been called: The Prophet of the Syrians; The Sun of the Syrians; The Lion of the Syrians; The Crown of the Syrians; The Harp of the Holy Spirit; The Pillar of the Church, etc.

St. Ephrem rightly deserves these endearing and everlasting terms, accolades and world-wide recognition. St. Ephrem indeed ranks among the giants of the poet-theologians of this world.

Endnotes

1. St. Ephrem the Syrian - Hymns on Paradise - Sebastian Brock. (This quotation has been provided by S. Brock. Introduction. P. 12. St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1990.
2. Ibid, Excerpts, P. 13-15.
3. Ibid, Excerpts, P. 15-16.
4. Ibid, P. 7.
5. Ibid, P. 8.
6. Ephrem the Syrian-Hymns. Kathleen McVey,P. 5.
7. Edessa, The Blessed City. J.B. Segal, P. 87. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970.
8. A Short History of Music. Alfred Einstein, P. 15.
9. Edessa, the Blessed City. J.B. Segal, P. 87; Ephrem the Syrian - Hymns. Kathleen McVey, P. 8; St. Ephrem the Syrian - Hymns on Paradise. Sebastian Brock, P. 8. Brock gives no specific date; Al Loo'lo Al Manthur, the History of Science and Syrian Literature, Patriarch Aphram I Barsom mentions that St. Ephrem lived for seventy years and thus his birth date is put around A. D. 303-304+ (Arabic Edition) P. 157. Bar Hebraeus Press, Holland 1987, 4th Publication.
10. St. Ephrem the Syrian - Hymns on Paradise. Sebastian Brock. Introduction. (Furnace - Baptism) P. 9.
11. Ephrem the Syrian-Hymns. Kathleen McVey,P. 427.
12. Edessa, the Blessed City. J.B. Segal, P. 87.
13. Ibid, P. 34.
14. St. Ephrem the Syrian-Hymns on Paradise, P. 40.
15. Ephrem the Syrian - Hymns. Kathleen McVey. This excerpt from CarminaNisibina(Cnis 1.11) has been provided by McVey, Pp. 16-17.

16. Ibid, from Carmina Nisibina (Cnis 2.2) P. 17.
17. Ibid, from Hymns against Julian (CJ 4.6) P. 23.
18. Ephrem the Syrian - Hymns on Paradise. Sebastian Brock quotes Evagrius, P.14.
19. Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 7, P. 39, 1946.
20. St. Ephrem the Syrian - Hymns on Paradise. Sebastian Brock, 18, P. 80.
21. Ibid, VI8, P. 112.
22. Ibid, Hymns on Paradise, X14, pp. 152-153.
23. Ephrem the Syrian - Hymns. Kathleen McVey, Hymns on Nativity 6,7. P.74.
24. Ibid, 1.99, P. 74.
25. Ibid, 48.17-18.
26. St. Ephrem the Syrian - Hymns on Paradise. Sebastian Brock. (Hymns on Faith V.17) pp. 73-74.
27. St. Ephrem the Syrian - Hymns. Kathleen Mcvey. Nat 8.2, P. 119.
28. St. Ephrem the Syrian - Hymns on Paradise, Sebastian Brock. pp. 24- 25. This quotation has been provided by S. Brock who quotes P. Bedgan, Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum (Paris and Leipzig, 1892) P. 679.
29. Edessa, the Blessed City. J. B. Segal. P.90. Footnote: F.C. Burkitt in St. Ephraim's prose and refutations (ed. C.W. Mitchell) 11, 1921, CXV.
30. The Call (Assyrian Orthodox Church of Virgin Mary. June-July-August issue, 1993.
31. St. Ephrem the Syrian - Hymns on Paradise. Sebastian Brock. P. 22. Footnote: Edited by P. Bedgan, Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum (Paris and Leipzig, 1892) Pp. 667,677.
32. Ibid. P. 33.

33. Ephrem the Syrian - Hymns. Kathleen McVey. P. 28. She quotes Knonholm, Motifs, 24f, nn. 65f and 7of, for the literature, and add Ottier, Saint Ephrem, 14-16.
34. Edessa, the Blessed City. J.B. Segal. P. 88.
35. "Frequently I Was Hungry," translated by Very Rev. John Khoury. 1965.
36. Matthew 25:1-13