

The Pearl: Hymn 1

The pearl from the sea

Ephrem the Syrian

1

(St. Columba: *How Sweet and Awesome*)

Upon a certain day I took a single pearl in hand.
And O! what Kingdom myst'ries I began to understand.

I saw therein the majesty of God the Lord on High,
and likewise Jesus, Who to save us came to earth to die.

How like a fountain was that pearl, refreshing so to me,
as from its depths and wondrous flow I drank deep mystery.

I set the pearl upon my palm to study it with care;
on every side one face looked back to greet my curious stare.

Just like this pearl, so dense, so deep, so altogether one
is He Who, passing knowledge, is God's Light and only Son.

He, like that pearl, the Bright One, Who can never clouded be,
possesses perfect pureness as a glorious mystery!

His glorious Body, well-refined, as in eternal youth,
reveals throughout, in whole and part, God's undivided truth.

And there, within that pearl, and in the Body of God's Son,
I saw the Church of Jesus resting, whole, and clean, and one.

The swirling cloud spoke of the milk of her who Him conceived,
and who a type of heaven is, where we shall be received.

I saw Him shining forth from her, and likewise I could see
His trophies, crowns, and over all His glorious victory!

I saw His helpful, overflowing, boundless, matchless grace
come forth from hiding to be known within His glorious face.

2

(Divinum Mysterium: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*)

It was greater to me than the ark, for I was astonished to see,
fold on fold without a shadow:
it was like light's daughter to me.
I heard sounds therein without a single tongue,
without speech a mystery,
like a sweet harp's melody.

Then, as if a trumpet blasted, as if thunder loudly rolled:
"Leave things hidden, take what is revealed;
cling to only what is told.
Like a gentle rain upon your waiting ears,
from the storm clouds up above
hear these words of heavenly love.

“Slight as manna they may seem to you, hardly worthy you should eat,
yet their truths, though but mere morsels,
fill your soul more than much meat.”
So this pearl was more than many books to me,
as I read and understood,
and it filled my soul with good.

So I asked it to speak unto me all its mysteries profound;
yet it had no mouth and from it I
heard not any words nor sound.
And it had not any ears that it might hear,
it could neither feel nor see;
yet it gave new sense to me!

3

(Brother James' Air: *The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want*)

It answered me and said, “The daughter of the sea am I.
From there I came, and here upon your open hand I lie.
Within me is a treasury of myst'ry for your eye.

“Look deep within me, there are many mysteries to know.
Search out the sea from which I came, plunge to its depths below.
Will you its Lord discover there, as you beneath it go?

“I saw the divers when they came and marveled so at me.
They took me in their hands and thus redeemed me from the sea,
though in its darkness and its depths they could but moments be.

“With waves of grace and blessing, like the waves upon the sea,
the Son of God breaks on us so that He might set us free.
Resisting or rejecting Him would utter folly be.

“Recall how faithless Egypt in the sea by God was drowned,
while Israel crossed, believing God, upon the bare, dry ground.
And what of you? Will you believe, and so in Christ be found?

“God rules the seas and all the creatures He has stationed there.
Have you a heart that cannot see His glory everywhere?
Will you continue silently in dreadful sin and error?”

4

(Picardy: *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent*)

Searching with thanksgiving, I ponder, prying into myst'ries sublime.
Praise like incense rises with wonder; disputations Godward climb.
Which of these must I come under? Which will pass the test of time?

Jonah was for three days a neighbor of the creatures in the sea.
They feared as they saw his labor, how from God he sought to be free.
What above all we must savor is our glorious God to see.