

## 06. Part II Gift (continued)

### 2. The Gospel has eyes (pages 28-34)





John witnesses by experience and writing that God is real and the impact of God in our lives is real.

He encourages us to be brave, to dare the response and the journey, to believe when we are in the dark.

John knew darkness (Toledo) and we have this echoed in his poetry. John surrendered to the impact. We can move from wherever we are towards God through Jesus.

The Gift is God giving himself in Jesus who is sharing his Spirit (communion) with us.

Let Jesus live in me, pray in me.



Faith gives knowledge – the knowledge that can come only through love. Recalling Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman ('The water that I give you will become for you a spring of water, welling up to eternal life', John 4:14), John of the Cross in Stanza 12 of the Spiritual Canticle, compares faith to a spring, and goes on:

'If only, on your silvered-over face, you would suddenly form they eyes I so long for, which I bear sketched deep within my heart'(SC, 12)

In commenting on these lines, John states that 'it seems that the Beloved is now always looking at the one he loves' (SC 12.5).

Later in Stanza 32 he writes: 'When you looked at me, your eyes imprinted in me your grace, so ardently did you love me.'



‘Imagine sitting on a quiet bench in the park, between some flower beds and backed by a hedge, composing a quite personal letter, absorbed in writing.

‘Someone is there. You notice this out of the corner of your eye. Someone is there looking at you; and has been for some time!’

‘The gospel has eyes – ‘the eyes I long for so’, John calls them – and the point comes on the journey where the bride meets those eyes which had long been looking on:

‘It seems to her that he is now always gazing upon her’ (Canticle<sub>I</sub>, II.4).  
... she finds herself a factor in another’s life and heart.’

In the ‘*Flame*’ John has captured that moment, and delivered it to us.  
In fact it encompasses our whole existence.’



O living flame of love, tenderly wound my soul  
to its deepest inner heart, without oppression.  
Come, consummate our love,  
tear through the veil of our union.  
If it be your will come and rend the veil of the temple.

O lamps of fire in deep caverns of feeling,  
Once obscured and blind  
Are now leading in the warmth  
and the passion of Your love.

Yet gently your hand does wound  
as you rend through the veil of my temple.  
Come, take this life that I give,  
So that I might come to live in this our dying.



‘If only, on your silvered-over face, you would suddenly form the eyes I so long for, which I bear sketched deep within my heart’ (SC, 12).

‘It has been said that ‘a person is enlightened’, not ‘when they get an idea, but ‘when someone looks at them.’ A person is enlightened when another person loves them. The eyes are windows on to the heart. They search the person out and have power to elicit life’ (page 28).

- ‘God’s gaze works four blessings in the soul:
  - it cleanses,
  - it makes beautiful,
  - it enriches
  - and enlightens’ (Spiritual Canticle 33.1).



‘You looked with love upon me  
and deep within your eyes imprinted grace.  
This mercy set me free,  
held in your love’s embrace,  
to lift my eyes adoring to your face’ (SC 32)

‘God is always like this, as the soul now sees God to be:  
stimulating, guiding, and giving being and strength  
and graces and gifts to all creatures,  
holding them all in Himself’ (Flame 4.7)

‘The Father spoke one word, who was his Son,  
and this word God is always speaking in eternal silence.  
It is in silence that we must hear it’ (Sayings 99)



I. 'The created world answers that he did pass this way, clothing whatever he looked at 'in beauty' (page 29).

'Pouring out a thousand graces,  
He passed these groves in haste;  
And having looked at them,  
with his image alone,  
He clothed them in beauty' (SC 5).

2. 'The Son is God's face smiling upon the world' (page 30).



- The proper response to God's offer is trusting belief which engages desire.

‘In the first place, you should realise that if you are seeking God, much more is your Beloved seeking you’ (Flame 3,27).

‘Desire with all your soul's desire to come to what in this life lies beyond your mind or the capacity of your heart’ (Ascent II.4.6).

‘John’s experience of the Spirit was not valued because it was felt. It was valued because it was real, and he could trust its reality even when he could not feel it’ (page 32).



- ‘Where God is concerned, the problem lies in our desiring too little, and growing means expanding our expectations; or rather, making God’s generosity, not our poverty, the measure of our expectations’ (page 33).

‘Enter within your heart and work in the presence of your Bridegroom who is always present loving you’ (Sayings 89).

‘Awaken us, my Lord, and shed your light upon us,  
that we might recognise and come to love  
the blessings that you always hold out to us,  
and we shall realise that you stepped forward to show us  
your favour and that you have not forgotten us’ (Flame 4.9)



If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask the Father,  
and he will give you another Advocate,  
to be with you forever.

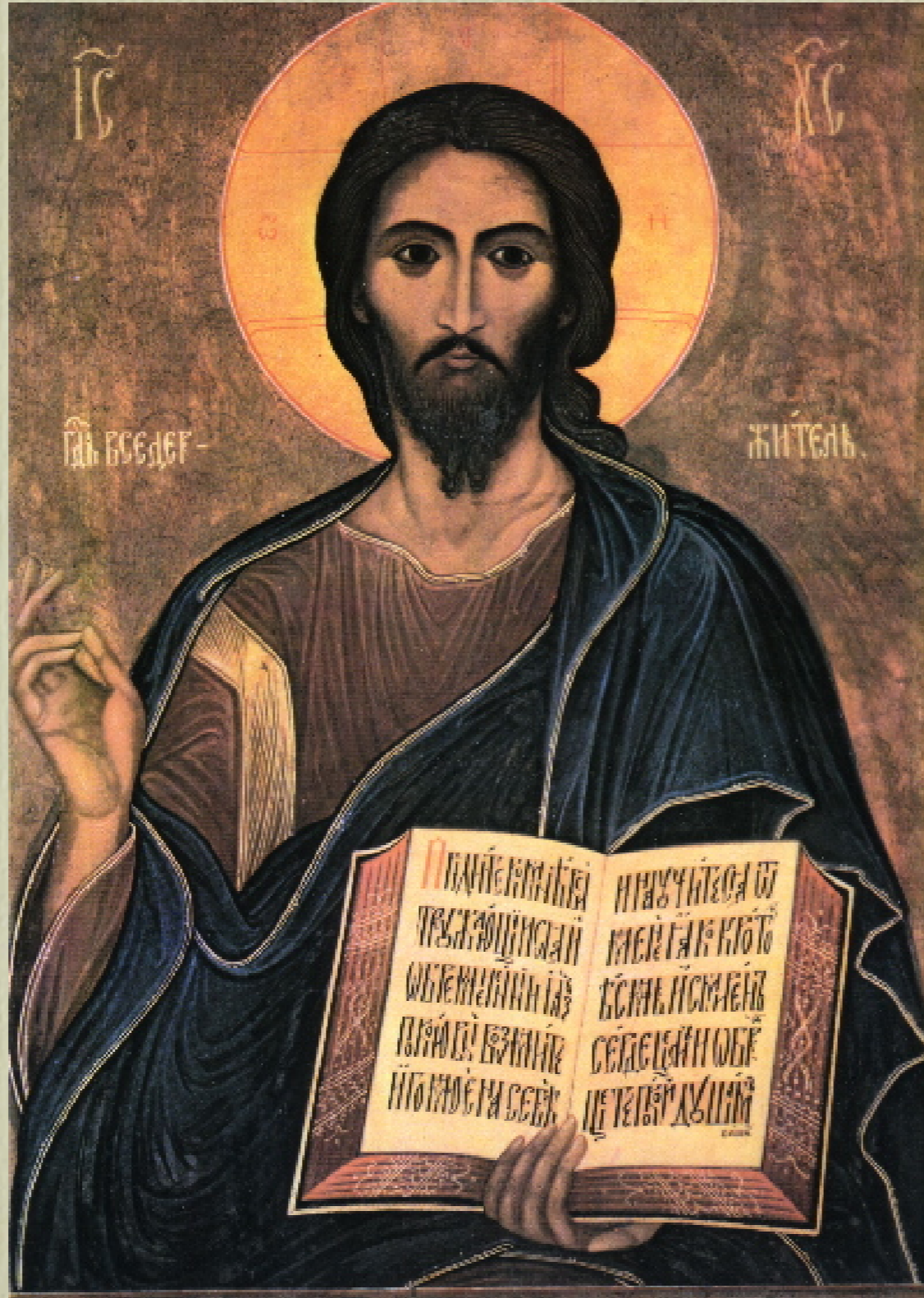
This is the **Spirit** of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because  
it neither sees him nor knows him.

You know him, because he abides with you,  
and he will be in you.

I will not leave you orphaned; **I** am coming to you ...

If you love me you will keep my word,  
and **my Father** will love you, and we will come to you  
and make our home in you.





Matthew 11:28-29



## Jesus' gaze and Peter

1. Peter's call: Luke 5:1-11
2. At the Supper: Luke 22:32
3. In the courtyard: Luke 22:62
4. Resurrection encounter: Luke 24:34
5. Resurrection encounter: John 21



‘God’s gaze is his love, and his love does things.

God’s gaze works four blessings in the soul:

it cleanses, makes beautiful, enriches and enlightens’ (page 28).

‘Is prayer possible now for me?’

Here is John’s contribution:

Christ’s loving gaze is constantly upon us,  
and he makes it possible.’



1Peter 1:8-9

‘Although you have not seen him, you love him;  
and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him  
and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,  
for you are receiving the outcome of your faith,  
the salvation of your souls.’



The Gospels are portraits of Jesus.

Jesus knew God in the love-communion that sustained and directed him.

Being man, he knew God in faith; that is to say, he chose to believe, and because he was faithful to that choice, he came to the experience the communion for which he longed.

He knew that real life consists in this communion.

When Jesus proclaimed: 'I have come that you may live and live to the full' (John 10:10), he was giving expression to his longing to share with us his own communion with God.